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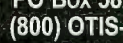
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JULY 2003 ✕ VOL. 28 NO. 7

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AP Photo/Laura Rauch

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Corporal Christopher Tate, of Shawnee, Kan., with Kilo Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Marines, 1st Marine Division, awaits orders on the southeastern edge of Baghdad.



Jeff Ryals via 7th Cavalry Association



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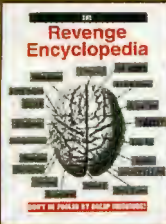
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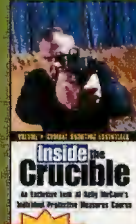


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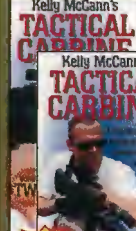
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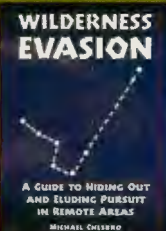
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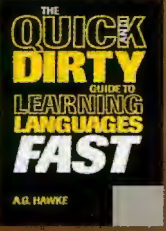
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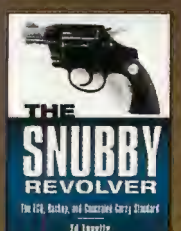
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# Command Guidance

BY LT. COL. ROBERT K. BROWN, USAR (RET.)

## Afterthoughts On The Iraqi War

Three weeks, yes, in 21 days, we kicked the snot out of the most powerful Arab army in the Middle East. Good on us and screw the slack-jawed, dull-eyed slugs who predicted doom and gloom; the talking heads who babbled their improvident predictions after looking into what must have been an extremely cloudy crystal ball. Those "military experts" who predicted a relatively precise number of casualties, ought to be ashamed of themselves for pandering on TV for a few coins. And, finally, once again, Peter Arnett got his left-wing ass kicked, as did Geraldo Rivera (who, incidentally, years ago changed his name from Gary Rivers. Ask him why.) for being so reckless as to draw in the sand the position of the unit he was with, along with the flanking units, thus allowing the TV camera to transmit it to Saddam's intelligence service.

I will say I was as surprised as the "chattering elite" that he did not use the bad stuff.



But shame on FOX (who for the most part I admire) for not only hiring this loud-mouthed, arrogant punk in the first place, but then for rehiring him after they canned him for the security violation. I still haven't gotten an explanation of this debacle.

I was certainly perplexed about the doomsayers, including some retired generals, agonizing over the potential of the Iraqi military; the Republican Guards, the Special Republican Guards, and yadda, yadda, yadda. And, who was I, a lowly former Nam SF Captain, to question all that glittering brass? Maybe, I thought, I was just dumb. I mean what was the problem? I remember that short-

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# Flak



## A Job Well Begun

Now that the battle in Iraq has essentially concluded — with a resounding victory for our courageous soldiers — I hope those Americans who opposed us helping the Iraqi people realize what we've achieved.

The great thing about our country is that we allow open political dissent. Iraqi citizens who disagreed with Saddam Hussein's genocidal dictatorship weren't so lucky. Who knows how many tens of thousands of people died at the hands of his regime.

Iraqi people who protested Saddam's stealing their wages and land so he could live in luxury (and provide support to the September 11th terrorists) were either executed by the hundreds or suffered inhumane torture in rotting prisons. Citizens who refused to fight in past wars were forced at gunpoint to the front lines and shot if they attempted to escape. Hundreds of children were recently freed by our troops from

imprisonment for their refusal to join Saddam's Hitleresque youth militia.

Thank you President Bush for having the courage to act instead of just talk. All the peace advocacy in the world did nothing to help these people — who now cheer us in the streets. Sadly, some soldiers lost their lives in this operation, but they freely took the risks so millions of Iraqi people could live and enjoy freedom. This is a victory for human rights.

Steven Ertelt  
Helena, MT 59604

## Arnett The Peter

In the context of the self-destruction of Peter Arnett, I have two questions related to the Tailwind controversy:

1) The People's Army of Viet Nam (aka NVA) in their offi-

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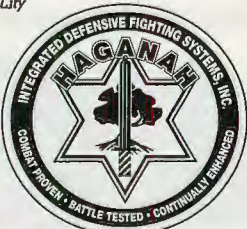
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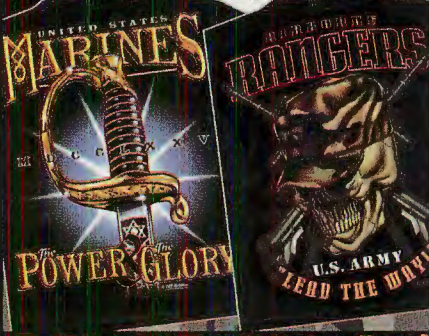
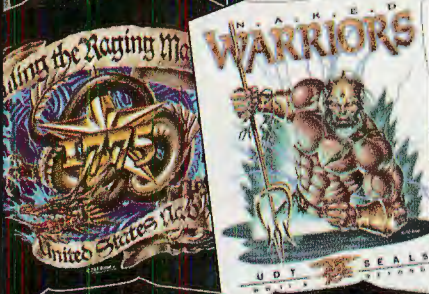
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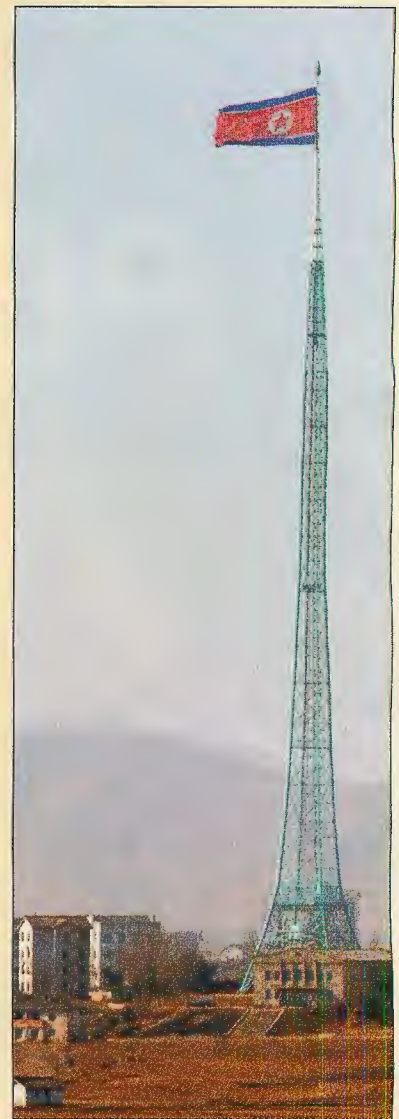


## Don't Rally Around This Flag, Boys

I am the Battalion executive officer for the United Nations Command Security Battalion [Korea]. One of our many duties in the Joint Security Area is to conduct the DMZ Orientation Program or Tour Program. The reason that I am writing you is that during our tour briefing we state that the Soldier Of Fortune Magazine has offered a one million dollar "bounty" on a 1x1-meter piece of the North Korean Flag that flies over the village of Gi Jong Dong (propaganda village) in the North. Is there any truth to this rumor? With all the media attention that we have been receiving in the last few months the information about the bounty has been passed and printed in several articles. Any information on this subject would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you in advance,  
Reik C. Andersen  
Major, Infantry-  
Battalion Executive Officer  
UNCSB-JSA  
734-8517  
"In Front Of Them All!"

We regret that there is no basis in fact for this "Urban Legend." We get the occasional inquiry about it, but did not know the source of this misinformation until now. Perhaps it would be best not to include this as a part of future briefings, lest some GI has enough to drink he thinks he has a plan to get a swatch of that flag, and creates an incident. In years past, we did offer \$1 million as a reward for any ComBloc pilot who would defect with an intact Mi-24 Hind, and lesser rewards for the safe capture of tyrants and criminals such as Idi Amin, but at present know of no such rewards for any person or thing on the Korean Peninsula. Of course, if a flatbed truck were to pull up in front of our office with the core of a North Korean nuclear reactor...



Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

cial chemical warfare histories criticizes the U.S. (aka us) for using defoliants (agent orange), incendiaries (napalm and willie peter), and CS RCA (tear gas). Significantly PAVN did not accuse us of using nerve gas or any lethal gas.

2) There were only two American defectors to the NVA-VC cause in the Viet Nam War era, and both after the supposed Tailwind incident.

Has anything come up to contradict or modify these two points? If the two main assertions in the Tailwind controversy — that we used nerve gas to kill defectors in Laos in 1970 — are still

contradicted by our enemy [and fact] how did Arnett get a job as a reporter?

Carl N. Brown

Arnett's escape hatch from responsibility for the Tailwind debacle was essentially that he didn't do the story, just lent his name to it and did voice-overs, so he wasn't responsible. How he continues to find employment with mainstream media, not being responsible and all, as Shakespeare's said, "'tis a mystery." We can only hope after his conduct in Iraq, he will be in the same unemployment line as "Baghdad Bob," Saddam's information minister.



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## Too, For, Six, Ate

In his article *Desert Déjà vu*, Dale Cooper had a problem counting the barrels on the Warthog's 30mm cannon. There are 7 not 8.

Jere Cockley.

*Uh, since they spin when firing, they're hard to count?*

## Inter-Service Rivalry?

One item the Marines are going to have to adhere to if they want Spec Op missions in the future is to become silent professionals, not in the lime-light of the TV camera gloating their bravado. This is why SOF dread using Marines unless they absolutely require a large sea-borne assault.

Christian Lowe's article, *Marine Corps Now Authorized SpecOps Unit* needs a few fact corrections as well.

He mentioned that the USMC Recon Teams seized the forward operating base "Camp Rhino" (prior to that it was Objective Rhino) when in fact that base was already seized and cleared by the

Rangers and Special Forces (Task Force Dagger) including the Kandahar Airport, then the Marines "occupied" the base after it was all clear. After the fall of Kandahar, General Franks decided to send the Marines by road march from Camp Rhino to the Kandahar airport. The Marines showed up with a platoon of media as usual and most of the viewers did not even notice when they entered the airport, painted on the control tower of the airport was "TEXAS 17." This was a calling card left by the U.S. Army Special Forces A-Team that had seized and cleared it long before any Marine had set foot on the tarmac. That's why they are true "Silent Professionals."

*name withheld*

## The Defamation Thing

Although I am a U.S. resident, SOF's addict and a great supporter of the U.S. troops, all the military branches and the U.S. special ops units, I would like to thank you for allowing me to read this "fine" article: "*the Israeli Shooting Tech.*" — last issue.

I find that article so annoying that

I would definitely reconsider my SOF membership. The writer's attitude in that article so upsets me that I barely could stop myself from bringing a judiciary action against the writer and the magazine.

Although I read the article more than a few times, I couldn't shake the bad feeling that I absorbed from reading it. The article is infected with examples and explanations regarding the so called "the Israeli shooting techniques," while the defamation spirit flies above it all. It will take me a book long of explanations to refer to each wrongful mistake that the educated writer named. But first comes first, I witnessed and practiced the "Weaver" method — it's an astonishing and a well-established system to handle a gun. I'm well aware of the so-called "Israeli shooting experts" that [are] selling their expertise all around — I find it embarrassing. Allow me to put some of the things in the right perspective. I don't know whatever kind of former "Mossad" agents you criticized, or why you chose specifically them to give your audience a reflection on the Israeli shooting capabilities, while obviously they are not a good demonstration to the all issue. Moreover, I find it suspi-

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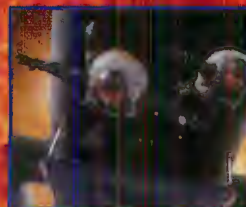




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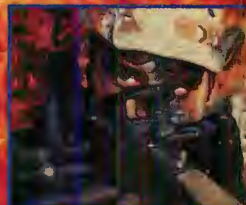
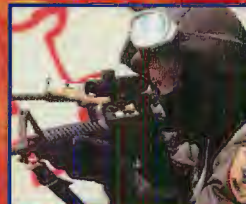
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Beneath the rubble in New York and Virginia and in the charred ashes of Pennsylvania lay our brothers, sisters and friends – the most recent American victims of this monstrous evil.

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cious that their accent played a roll in your criticism. Yes, some of the techniques that you shared with us are well used all over Israel and in the world. Yes, like you so wisely observed those are basic drills, and basics only. No, the drills demands using of both hands, plus aiming (not as demonstrated in the pictures). Yes, instinctive shooting is being taught in some institutes in Israel, for self-defense purposes only and it is an effective method! Nowhere in Israel, drawing automatically means shooting. Aiming is taught and required, even from simple civilians. The article gives the reader a reflection on things that the

writer might have seen, but by far out of context, and far from accurate. To those examples the writer willfully attached nasty remarks with respect to the slogans of the "Israeli courses" that take place all over the states (although, I am quit agree with him, they are out of order).

I can understand the frustration of the writer that some arrogant Israeli instructors penetrated to his territory. But still it is not an excuse for a total and collateral defamation of the Israeli shooting capabilities. Dear friend, although you might be a well-distinguished rifle/gun man, pay a short visit

in the "YAMAM" training facility in Jerusalem, you might be able to reconsider your narrow opinion.

Boaz Levy, adv.  
(Former Israeli SpecOps unit veteran, and former small-arms instructor.)

*If I read your letter correctly, you seem to agree with the thrust of the story, which is criticizing the hucksters who claim to be former Mossad, Israeli SpecOps, etc.; not criticizing the real-deal instructors or their techniques. Defamatory? You do not defame the legitimate by pointing out the flaws in frauds. SOF has visited a number of (genuine) Israeli training facilities over the years, and has always reported on them favorably. You seem to imply the frauds were subject to criticism because they were Israelis, not because they were frauds. That is not the case. Lighten up?*

### Eastern Sampson Option

I greatly appreciated the info about Israel's nuclear Sampson Option program, designed for fearful retaliation against such attackers, like Iraq, Syria, Iran, etc. I firmly believe that Taiwan should adopt a Samson Option of its own because of the Red Chinese threat so close to its shores. Taiwan should make a stockpile of tactical battlefield nuclear weapons and be ready to use them in case it is in serious danger of collapsing from an invasion by China. Such a nuclear weapons program by Taiwan should be called either "Crush The Chinese Invaders" or the "Chiang Kai-shek Option."

I have nothing but total hatred for the Beijing regime, am a 100% supporter of Taiwan, and greatly admire the late Chiang Kai-shek. I am also the proud owner of a genuine Chinese Nationalist 8x57mm Mauser (made in 1936, likely in Shanghai), which helped a lot of Japanese and Chinese Reds to die for their countries.

My thanks to the fine folks of SOF and its loyal readers, who refuse to kiss the boot of the Democratic Party and Red China. I request that SOF publish a good article about our ally Taiwan in a future issue. Long live Taiwan and TO HELL with the Red Chinese dictatorship! Any readers of SOF are welcome to e-mail me, especially any English-fluent readers in Taiwan.

John Bales  
chinesemauser@yahoo.com ✉



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# TERRORISM

# SITREP

BY DR. MARTIN BRASS

## AMERICA AT WAR

### "A HUNDRED OSAMA BIN LADENS"

created by Iraqi war warns Egypt President Mubarak. AP obtains al-Qaeda audio: "Muslim brothers, let us promise to devote our lives to martyrdom in way of Allah. America has attacked Iraq and soon will also attack Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and Sudan. Voice believed to be bin Laden's orders: "Avenge the innocent children" of Iraq. "If you started suicide attacks you will see the fear of Americans all over the world. Those people who cannot join forces in jihad should give financial help to those Mujahedeen who are fighting against U.S. aggression."

**CRUSADER WAR** Osama's al-Nidaa website mobilizes for massive "guerrilla warfare."

**UNITED STATES** SENTENCED to 155 years. Mohamad Hammoud cigarette-smuggling ring Lord in North Carolina funded Hizbollah. ARSON PLOT on D.C. Metrorail system possibly thwarted after capture of al-Qaeda "architect" of 9-11, Khalid Sheik Mohammed.

**PHILIPPINES** MOSQUES BLOWN-UP in retaliation for bombing which killed 16 injured 50. MORO Islamic Liberation aimed at igniting Christian-Muslim war. "STATE OF LAWLESS" Violence declared. Crackdown on terrorists. EXPELLED Iraqi diplomat Husham Husain. ARRESTED 11 Iraqi nationals linked to Muslim extremists, the Abu Sayyaf Group, which is linked to Saddam.

**COLOMBIA** EASTER TERROR. FARC opens fire on religious procession. Three killed before police repel attack.

**INDONESIA** CIVIL WAR LOOMING. 25-year Aceh secessionist movement which killed 10,000 threatens to flare-up again.



**RUSSIA** Accused of supplying Saddam intelligence, lists of assassins for "hits" in the West. ARMS SALES details by Russia and Israel of military aircraft, rockets and missiles to China, Syria, and Egypt provided.

**BALKANS** KOSOVO: KLA allegedly using Kosovo Protection Corp organized by NATO as shield for military-weapons training for potential independence movement from Serbia. ALBANIA NATIONAL ARMY (ANA) labeled terrorist group by U.N. RAILROAD BRIDGE blown up, two ANA operators killed in explosion.

**ITALY** FUGITIVE ABU ABBAS caught by U.S. SpecOps in Iraq. 18-year fugitive was convicted *in absentia* in Italy for terrorism and hijacking. Abbas, leader of faction of Palestine Liberation Front, hijacked cruise ship *Achille Lauro* with 500 passengers. 1995 CASE SENSATIONALIZED when Jewish American Leon Klinghoffer was killed in wheelchair and thrown overboard.

**CZECH REPUBLIC** RADIO FREE EUROPE targeted. Iraqi agents allegedly plot to attack Radio Free Iraq broadcast in Arabic. EXPELLED Iraqi diplomat tied to 9-11 Mastermind Mohammed Atta.

**ISRAEL** ASSASSINATION PLOT on Prime Minister Sharon by Lebanese-Canadian Hizbollah agent pre-empted. HIZBOLLAH infrastructure in Canada orchestrated from Iran.

**ENGLAND** Plot to take down passenger jet with shoulder-fired missile from nearby amusement park heading to world's busiest airport, Heathrow, thwarted by thousands of military and police. STATELESS CLERIC Abu Hamza al-Masri, Islamic Army of Aden member's citizenship stripped. Cleric wanted in Yemen on terrorism charges can now be extradited. President Bush is "the GENGIS KHAN of this century" and Tony Blair "his chambermaid," Masri said.

**ALGERIA** DISAPPEARED. More than 30 European tourists in two months believed to be held captive by bandit chief thought to be linked with bin Laden.

**KUWAIT** U.S. WAHABISM "SHOVED DOWN AMERICANS THROAT?" National Defense. Muslim Army Sergeant Akbar kills two and wounds 14 with grenade attack as he allegedly yelled "You guys are coming into our countries and you're going to rape our women and will kill our children." SAUDI-FUNDED Akbar attended Bilal Islamic Center linked with King Fahd Mosque. His Muslim military chaplain trained by Saudi-funded organization.

**UGANDA** SADDAM link to Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). ADF chief organizes "international Mujahadeen team mission" to smuggle arms on global scale to holy warriors fighting against U.S., UK and Israeli influence in Africa. Members trained in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

**IRAQ** U.S. Marines find suicide bomber wired vests filled with explosives. Shias funded by Iran oppose U.S. occupation. "DR GERM," nerve-agent guru surrenders yet no weapons of mass destruction found to date. HIZBOLLAH operatives captured on Iraq-Syrian border. TERROR CAMP discovered with 20 buildings on 25 acres operated by PLF. Chemicals, beakers, pipes and bomb making equipment found.

**AFGHANISTAN** THREE MARINES killed in firefight when Taliban launch rocket in U.S. base. BLOWN-UP Four Taliban just before bombs go off. Taliban leaders announce reorganizing to destabilize U.S.-backed Karzai government. Schools burned. RED CROSS worker killed. OPIUM TRADE becomes "ECONOMIC NARCOTIC." TERRORISTS use drug-smuggling routes to escape. #1 Opium-trading Afghanistan supplies 75% of European supply and all of Russia.

**TURKEY** SYRIAN suicide bombers arrested after one successful bombing.

**SYRIA** OSAMA HUB that channeled dozens of extremists "shipping killers into Iraq by bus-loads" according to Rumsfeld. BUSH THREATENS SYRIA: "cooperate" to expel Iraqi Chiefs or else.

**PAKISTAN** TON OF DRUGS seized by border guards smuggled in from Afghanistan on caravan of donkeys through the Murda Karex mountains. TRANSIT ROUTE. Pakistan route for one fourth of heroin from Afghanistan. "HAVEN OF CHOICE" harbors thousands of Islamic Militants convinced that Pakistan Nuclear capability is protection from attack by U.S.

**JORDAN & YEMEN** IRAQI SPIES plotting attacks on U.S. foreign targets arrested and explosives confiscated in sleeper cells. U.S. requests 300 Iraqi secret agents to be expelled from 50 countries.



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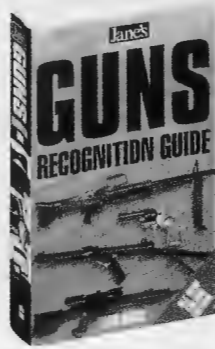
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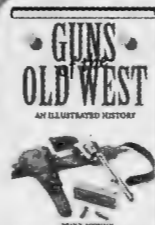
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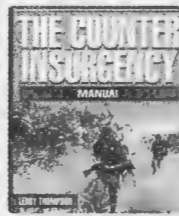
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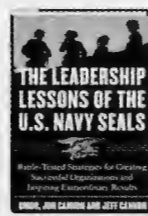
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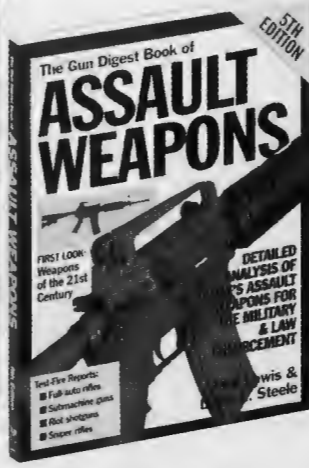
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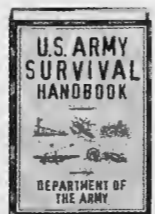
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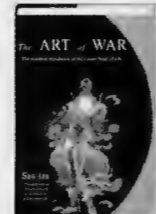
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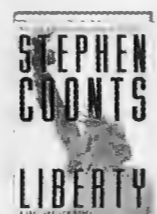
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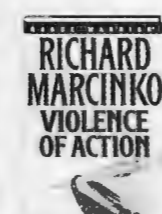
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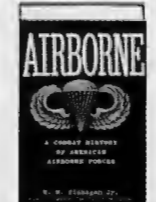
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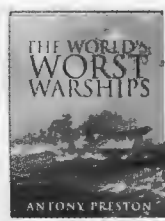
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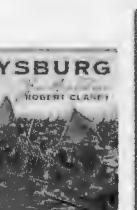
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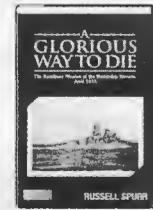
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# Bulletin Board

## III Wind

The 100-year sandstorm that swept through southern Iraq the second Tuesday and Wednesday of the war was followed the next day by a drenching rainstorm. Our troops were bogged down and could not maneuver effectively.

The media was already wondering if the troops were in a "quagmire" and dire predictions of gloom and doom came from the left wing.

What they didn't report was that, after the weather had cleared, the Marine group that was mired the worst looked out at the plain they had been about to cross, and what did they see? Hundreds if not thousands of antitank and antipersonnel mines that had been uncovered by the wind and then washed off by the rain.

Had they proceeded as planned, many lives would have undoubtedly been lost. As it was, they simply drove around them and let the demolition teams destroy them.

In God we trust

— Richard Rongstad



courtesy Bill Morson

## Floral Flag

This floral flag is a stone's throw from Vandenberg AFB, California, and it is 740 feet long and 390 feet wide. That's 6.65 acres of patriotic Larkspurs: Each star is 24 feet in diameter, each stripe is 30 feet wide, and the flag contains an estimated 400,000+ plants — more than 2-million flowers. You can't miss it from the air, as it's just 2-1/2 hours north of Hollywood, off V Street, south of Ocean Ave., in Lompoc.

**HOLOGRAPHIC WEAPON SIGHT**

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Firefights in close quarter environments are won by fast accurate target acquisition. Locking onto the target fast means you win. The alternative is not an option. The HOLOGraphic Weapon sight (HWS) delivers unmatched speed gains... and is the solution.

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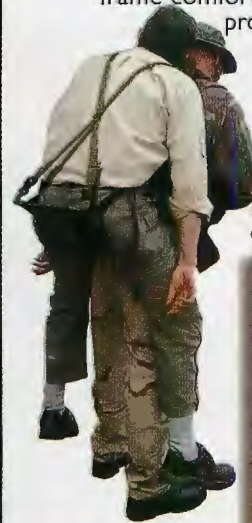
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## Remembering A Marine

One of the USMC expeditionary fields in Kuwait has been named Joe Foss Field, after our late friend General Joe Foss (MOH).

## FREE Flag Decals

For free, top-quality static-cling flag decals (3.25x5") to display to show your support for the troops and let the world know we stand united, send a S.A.S.E. to: Street-Signs-USA.com

c/o America Stands United  
P.O. Box 2490  
Binghamton, NY 13902-2490

Send a bigger envelope with more stamps, and get more free flag decals. *Thanks, guys!*

## Millions Of Ribbons For U.S. Troops

Three Southern California businessmen and a church pastor who earlier this year collected and distributed more than 1.1 million Valentines to U.S. troops, are now asking Americans to display yellow ribbons to show appreciation for our troops both here and abroad.

Michael Fleming, David Fleming, and Paul Kramer and Pastor Tom Rothhaar are on a mission to have 100 million yellow ribbons and bows displayed all over the country on cars, homes, businesses, fences, and sign posts. The businessmen

are distributing free yellow ribbons this month to their customers at their Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour Restaurant and Skateland Skating Rink in Los Angeles, and at the Light of the Canyon UMC in Anaheim. They are also encouraging other businesses and churches around the country to give out ribbons to their guests and to promote their display.

They are asking that the ribbons be left up until the war ends and the troops come home.

"The yellow ribbon campaign is a wonderful thing to do right now," said Alice Wax, Executive Director and founder of National Military Appreciation Month (NMAM).

More information on the campaigns can be found at: <http://www.ValentinesForTroops.com> ; or by contacting Alice Wax at (703) 765-8613; or visit <http://www.NMAM.org> .

## And Welcome Home

For anyone who is interested in sending a welcome-home card to every GI's favorite little sister, Jessica Lynch's address is: c/o Gregory O. Lynch, Sr., R.R. 1, P.O. Box 132A, Palestine, WV 26160.

## NPRC Record Requests Now On-Line

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has an improved method of requesting documents from the NPRC. The NPRC provides copies of documents from military personnel records to authorized requesters. Their new web-based application will provide better service on these requests by eliminating their mailroom-processing time.



Making your next step safer

The BfR Combat Boot is the world's first standard issue combat boot that provides a measure of protection against anti-personnel landmines. Its protective properties have been independently tested by the Royal Military College of Science in the United Kingdom.

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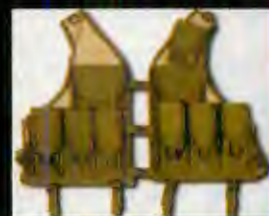
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Also, because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. You can access this application at: <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>.

(Note: There is no requirement to type "www" in front of the web address.) This improved on-line request process should be used INSTEAD OF Standard Form 180 from veterans or the veteran's next of kin.

**Brothers In Arms**

From Germany, A Chaplain's Thought For The Day (Thursday, 10 April 03):

As usual, I was running late. So you can imagine my frustration level as I approached the main gate of Ramstein Air Base only to find traffic backed up! Nearing the checkpoint I realized that not only was there a long line of cars, but traffic had come to a complete stop as a result of all entrance gates being closed. Over the past 18 months there have been many opportunities to practice our patience as we have had to "hurry up and wait" as a result of heightened security. While we realize the necessity, it's still frustrating at times for even the most easy-going folks. This was one of those times for me! I needed to be where I was going, and I needed to be there NOW!

The German soldiers, the ones manning the entrances of American military installations here in Germany, were just milling around, chatting as if those of us in line had all the time in the world. Things seemed to go from bad to worse! The German gate guards began walking among the stopped cars, asking us to turn off our engines and headlights. I realized that no traffic was exiting or entering the Air Base. My feelings of frustration began to turn to ones of concern: Just what was going on?

A few minutes later I noticed blue lights approaching from the direction of the air terminal. Close behind were two military medical buses with their "red cross" insignia. Lights were on in the buses, and IV bags could be seen hanging. It was then that I realized that these were more of our wounded warriors being transported from the battlefields to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center for treatment.

I certainly wasn't prepared for what happened next. All of the German sol-

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**30 brutal "fight-ending" moves you can learn in less than an hour!**

# **"Why Are Big, Tough, Bad Ass Fighters So Terrified Of Little Bobby Taylor?"**

**In the most sizzling display of raw fighting savvy you'll ever witness, Taylor PROVES you can quickly learn... and just as quickly use... his personal "Bag O' Nasty Tricks" to completely obliterate someone twice your size. In fact... these vicious tricks work best when you're outwelled, oversized and out-muscled by your opponent!**

By Bob Pierce  
President, TRS

(Dateline, Visalia, CA) -- Bob Taylor is a little man with a **smart mouth** and a **bad attitude**.

So he *had* to learn how to fight – and **win** – against the bigger guys who looked down on him and figured him for an easy target. In school. In the jungles and battlefields of Vietnam. In the filthy streets ruled by drug-dealing gangs.

He's **just 5 feet 6 inches tall**, and *maybe* 140 pounds soaking wet (on a good day). Small features. Thin arms, thin legs, thin neck. You'd *never* pick him for a fighter. Too little.

Nevertheless, Bob Taylor is widely regarded among the elite martial arts world as perhaps **the best "self educated" street fighter around**. *Nobody* who knows about Bob's fighting abilities would *ever* willingly go up against him without packing a loaded shotgun. Hand to hand, *you will lose a fight against him*, no matter how big, or muscled, or experienced you are.

**What's this got to do with you?** Plenty. If you, too, are "size challenged", or usually find yourself looking up at people when they talk to you... this is the **PERFECT** fighting tactics system you could ever ask for. You don't need to be strong, or agile, or possess magic powers. In fact... your size is actually

an **ADVANTAGE** in a fight.

And if you're *large* size... or even a big gorilla type... then you want to see Bob's tricks *before you ever leave the house again*. Because, if you don't understand the advantage a smaller man has against you, you're **dead meat** in a real fight. What's more... knowing these nasty "little guy" fighting tricks allows *you* to use them too. They are just as devastating when used *by* a big guy *against* another big guy... or a vicious small guy looking to punch your lights out.

But whether you're big, or little, or in-between... you'll want to know what Bob Taylor has to offer you... because...

## **You Can See It For FREE, If You Want!**

I'll explain in a second...

First, though... there's a few things you need to understand.

**This ain't your normal martial arts**, not by a long shot. Bob developed his unique style of "dirty fighting" during his **30 years** of front-line combat and jungle fighting, bar brawls and ambushes, bounty hunting and busting up narcotics gangs. He's worked as a private eye, a personal *armed bodyguard* to superstar rock groups (like **Aerosmith**, the **Who** and **Led Zeppelin**), and has been "loaned-out" for his expertise in "hot action" ca-



*Bob Taylor may only be 5' 6" and maybe 140-pounds, but he is never-the-less one of the most feared "self-educated" fighters on earth. Now he wants to show YOU all his small-man's "dirty tricks"!*

nine handling to 11 different police jurisdictions. (You know it's *serious shit* when the dogs are called in!) He's also a recognized "**Chi Master**" – at an infamous **Soldier of Fortune** convention, he **drove a steel rod through his forearm**, tied it to a new Ford Mustang, and **dragged the car 287 feet...** without blood, without pain, without scarring. (Don't try this at home.)

What's more, Bob is among the few **world-class masters** left in the forgotten art of **knife-throwing**. (*And* he's a *knife designer*. His blades are among the most sought-after weapons in the martial arts world). He's also a master at **improvised weapons** – and can stick



an unsharpened coat-hanger *through* a car door at ten feet.

And (with Randy Wanner) he developed the **world's first system of disarming** an attacker holding a gun on you – this system has been studied and used by cops all over the world for ten years. Bob and Randy developed their disarming tactics by **pointing guns loaded with “Red-Jet” simunition at each other and firing**. Randy nearly lost an ear. Bob nearly got a wax bullet between the eyes. It was the most *viciously-real* training anyone had ever done with weapons – and they have the scars to prove it.

But... it's Bob's **hand-to-hand fighting skills** that have won him the awesome and unreserved respect he now has in the fighting world.

He realized long ago that a little guy actually has *advantages* against a bigger opponent. Think of the big guy as a **bat-talion of tanks with no infantry support**. They will knock the hell out of other tanks, crush buildings and annihilate bridges. But a squad of enemy soldiers moving fast on *foot* (and “under the tanks radar”) planting plastic explosives by hand, would rip a gaping hole right up the middle of the tanks. *Without suffering a casualty*.

You see, big guys are confident *from the chest up*. All their lives, they've used their size, weight and superior strength to crush opponents. But from their **waist down... they're as vulnerable as kittens**.

Having someone like Bob teach you the **dirty tricks and brutal finishing strikes** he's learned from years of real fighting... well, it's simply the **BEST** education you could ever wish for. Literally in *just one short hour*, Bob can take you from zero to *one thousand* on the scale of being **dangerous**.

His stuff is that good.

**So here's what I have for you:** I hauled Bob Taylor down to the filming studio here in Visalia just last week, and spent two days videotaping the little bastard as he revealed *every fighting secret he has*.

I am frankly *astonished* he has revealed so much, to tell you the truth. I figured he'd give us a “taste” of his “**Bag O' Nasty Tricks**”... but he just dropped the whole thing on us. Didn't hold back even *one* secret.

## Listen To What Men Who Know Are Saying About Bob Taylor!

*“After seeing Bob Taylor in action, all my hand-to-hand skills suddenly seem inadequate... this is the most dangerous man I've ever seen in a fighting situation.”*  
– Vern Faria, Central Valley, California

*“Bob may look small at first glance, but I guarantee you'll think you're fighting two men at once if you ever square up with him. The tricks and strikes he uses are simply the most effective ways to dominate a fight I've ever seen.”* – M. Martinez, New Mexico

*“Only a guy who's really mixed it up in the shit could ever put together a real-life system like this. You really don't need to know much more than what Bob shows you to confidently walk almost any street in the world.”* – C. Lew, Irvine, California

*“Whew! Absolutely the nastiest fighting secrets I've ever been shown. Still, the way Bob teaches, it's easy stuff to master. I can definitely see using these dirty tricks if I'm ever in another dangerous situation. Who wants a drawn out slugfest, when you can end the fight in two seconds using this vicious stuff?”* – R. Pimentel, New Zealand

I respect him for that. Other fighters have been hounding Bob for *years* to give up his secrets – and he's just smiled that little grimace he has, and refused. These secrets have been his “ticket” to a **very full and exciting career** as a soldier, cop, detective, bodyguard and bounty hunter. No one, big or small, could stand against him in a fight.

And now, **we have everything he knows**, packed tight in 90 minutes of the most breathtaking footage you've ever seen. Here's a sample of what you're about to see:

**Where the most vulnerable targets are on a big man...** spots you can *easily* get to *without being touched by him in return!*

- How to take out a larger attacker “in close”... *without ever striking above his waist*.
- **How to crush any attacker's feet with a single stomp!** (Do it wrong, as *most* martial artists do, and you'll just piss him off. Do it the way Bob shows you, and his feet will collapse *like socks full of crushed walnuts*.)
- How to use the **psychological advantage** you have against an attacker who thinks he's going to rip you up easily. (*Big surprise* for him, nice tidy 2-second fight for you.)
- **How to never get hurt yourself**

**in a fight**, even if you go against Mr. Universe!

- **How to line up your best physical weapons to send him instantly into a world of intense, blinding pain!** (The most unusual – and *brutally effective* – use of thumbs, fingernails, elbows, knees and feet you've ever witnessed! Easy to learn, simple to use, too.)
- **Why the most devastating head-butt you can deliver does NOT require any strength.** (Bob demonstrates by wrapping four flooring tiles – “**strength factor**” of **11.2**, *more than a human skull!* – with a layer of rubber to simulate skin... and then *obliterating* it with a single head-butt. Amazing proof you won't ever forget when you need it...)
- **How to make your attacker suddenly feel like he's being ripped to pieces by a pack of wild dogs!**
- **How to break his collar bone without using your fist!** (A neat trick *entirely new* to martial arts!)
- **How to do exactly what the big guy NEVER expects you to do in the first second of a fight** – leaving him without a real strike, and *utterly open to your choice of a dozen finishing moves!*



- **How to do more damage in a 2-second "flurry" of attacking strikes... than two men can usually do against one victim!**

And a *lot* more. Bob reveals (for the first time) **why he never cuts his left thumbnail** (this will *shock the hell out of you*)... why he *prefers* to go against bigger opponents... **why so many of the moves "regular" martial artists teach will actually hurt you as much as your opponent...** and all the *sneaky "psychological" tricks* he uses to fool opponents in the *crucial first seconds of any fight*.

This is **must-see** stuff... for anyone who wants to know how **REAL** people fight. But it's *especially* important to see if you – like Bob, like *most* guys out there – know you're going to be *smaller* than the guys you're likely to come up against in any dangerous situation.

**Here's what to do now:** I've arranged for you to see Bob's 2-video package – it's called "**Small Man's Advantage**" – for a *ridiculously-generous "no risk" time*. All you need to do is call **1-800-899-8153** and tell whoever answers you want "**Bob Taylor's New Kick-Ass Video Package**". You *don't risk a penny...* because of this special one-time-only *outrageously-generous guarantee* I'm giving you (which lets you see everything for **FREE** if you choose). But you *must* put up your "good faith" money first – that's the only way Bob will allow us to do this. (Like a lot of sought-after fighters, Bob's been burned one too many times by slick marketers, so he's not taking any chances even with us.)

You can use your credit card. Your price for this hour-and-a-half long, super-packed video is just \$69. That's an *incredible deal* considering that you're receiving highly specialized "end it now" fight info that is simply **NOT** available anywhere else.

Or, if you prefer to pay by check or money order (payable to **TRS**), you can simply fill out the **Priority Order Form** to your right and mail it right away with your payment. Or, you can just *fax* the Order Form, with your credit card info, to **1-559-732-5537**.

No matter what "pre-payment" method you choose, I will make sure your video is *rushed out by return mail*, so you'll get it in just a few short days.

When you get it, you will have a **full 6 months** to watch it, train with it, use it however you wish, without any risk at all. If, during your 6-month "trial", you decide you *don't* want the video – for any reason, or for *no reason at all* – simply return it (in any condition) and you'll receive a **prompt refund** of your payment. Just like that. I trust you *without reservation* on this. Your word is gold around here – whatever you decide, we'll go with.

That, of course, means that you can freely order the video... take the full 6 months to study every second of it... and then return it for a full refund. *No questions asked*. And you will have seen Bob's entire "**Bag O' Nasty Tricks**" for **FREE**.

I don't care which decision you make. This stuff is just too important not to get out, as soon as possible, to every man who want to get his hands on this. Buy the tape, as most guys will do... or see it *free...* just **SEE** it, all right? The secrets you learn could *save your life*.

Just call right now. Because of the "overly generous" nature of this offer, I've been forced to limit my financial vulnerability by only duping **188 videos**. When they're gone, I'm not sure we'll dupe any more or not – it depends on how the profits (if there are any) kick out. (I fully expect to *lose my shirt* on this.)

I know from experience that the guys who are *really* interested in this will call

right away – I expect these 188 videos to disappear quickly. So, you gotta act right now, while this magazine article is still hot in your hands.

Don't miss out. You don't risk a penny. It's the *best stuff* you'll ever see, if you're serious about fighting to win. But decide for yourself.

Sincerely,



Robert Pierce  
President, TRS

**P.S.** One last thing – *I almost forgot*. We've also put together – with Bob Taylor's help – an amazing little "**Target**" map of the human body, showing all the **BEST** targets for you to go after on a big opponent. Just having this "map" will *erase all doubt* in your mind that you can – and *will*, if pushed – **utterly demolish anyone**, regardless of size, who screws with you. And take them out *quickly*, in blinding pain that will make them think twice before bullying anyone smaller than them again. I've got 188 sets of these "maps" printed up, one for each video in the warehouse. You call right now, you get one. You snooze, you lose.

Remember... you have a **full 6-month money-back guarantee**, so you don't risk a penny at any time. But you *must* order right now.

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**For fastest service use your credit card and Call Toll-FREE**

**1-800-899-8153 (Dept SM-23)**

**YES!** I want to learn Bob Taylor's amazing "Small Man Bag O' Nasty Tricks", which guarantees I will immediately be able to **defeat a larger, stronger, heavier and taller opponent** in just seconds, using all the "hidden" advantages I would naturally have. I realize that this entire package is 100% RISK FREE -- if I don't like it for *any* reason I can simply send it back and I'll be returned every penny of my purchase price, *without hassle*. But the cool human body "Target Map" is *mine to keep FREE* no matter what. *That's generous*. I know there's a limited run of only 188 total, which is why I'm acting quickly on this. **Here's how I want to pay:**

Enclosed is my check or money order (make payable to TRS) for \$74 (\$69 + 5 S&H)

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diers, our gate guards, began walking toward the concrete barriers that divide the inbound and outbound lanes of traffic. As the blue lights neared, more German soldiers seemed to appear from nowhere, lining the road, shoulder to shoulder. Right on cue, without a word being spoken, these soldiers snapped a sharp salute as the buses drove past, rendering arms until well after the last bus had passed.

Needless to say, I was deeply moved. What a show of respect for fellow soldiers! Soldier to Soldier, rendering honor and respect! Our allies, our comrades, those who know the price that some have to pay for freedom did not have to be asked or prompted, it came from their character and soldiering heart!

May God bless and watch over all soldiers and their loved ones as they stand in harm's way for us!

Blessings and Peace,  
CH (COL.) David E. McLean  
Chief, Pastoral Services  
ERM/LRMC



**Baghdad Bob: Missing in Action**

Baghdad Bob (Sahaf Mohammed Saeed) is the Rodney Dangerfield of Third World mouthpieces.

Make no mistake, Bob was a world-class comedian, using his daily press briefings to assail the United States and insisting that the infidel coalition forces were committing suicide at the walls of Baghdad and at Saddam Hussein airport — at the same moment, television viewers were watching coalition tanks and troops capture the airport and city.

Bob still “gets no respect:” The U.S.-led coalition issued a deck of cards with the photos of 55 “most wanted” members of Saddam Hussein’s regime. Saddam is the Ace of Spades and even his half-brother Barzan is the “5” of Clubs.

But Baghdad Bob didn’t get his own card!

Some choice Baghdad Bob quotes:

“My feelings — as usual — we will slaughter them all.”

“God will roast their stomachs in hell at the hands of Iraqis.”

“We will welcome them with bullets and shoes.” [recall Iraqis beating Saddam’s statues and posters with their shoes.]

“We will push those crooks, those mercenaries, back into the swamp.”

“We went into the airport and crushed them. We cleaned the whole place out.

*Continued on page 80*



# "Picture Two People, Locked In Mortal Combat, One With Both Hands Wrapped Around The Other's Neck. Now, Imagine Yourself In This Scene And Tell Me... What Would You Do?"

(Hint: Whatever Your Answer, The Odds Are... It's Wrong!)"



**K**ick him in the groin." "Strike the arms or punch the solar plexus." "Grab the hands." "Stomp on his instep"

The list is always the same.

Unfortunately... each answer put your life at risk in the face of a life-or-death assault.

Why? Because invariably when Tim Larkin asks students this question at his *Target-Focus Training*® bootcamps...

## No One—Not Even Trained Martial Artists—Sees Themselves As The One Doing The Choking

They're always the one being choked.

It's human nature. We shy from victory, from domination. It's the way most of us are built.

But think about it... couldn't this have been the scenario?

*You are surprised by two attackers. You've completely disabled the first and now have control of the second and are about to put him totally out of commission...*

Possible? Of course. It's just that no one sees it this way.

**Here's the problem:** A thug comes up, places a knife to your throat and demands your wallet. Taking him at his word you give him the wallet. He then proceeds to stab you repeatedly leaving you in a pool of your own blood, astonished you've been stabbed.

**What went wrong?** Just this. You ASSUMED he only wanted the wallet. After all, why would anyone stab someone over a few measly bucks? YOU certainly wouldn't do that if you were robbing someone (by the way... when WAS the last time you robbed someone and put a knife to their throat?).

You see, that IS the problem...

## You've Just Transferred Your Own Moral Code To A Sociopathic Killer... And With It, Quite Possibly, Your Life.

See, nothing bothers him. He's certainly not bound by your morals. With a total disregard for society and it's rules, he has no regret whatsoever in cramming a blade into your gut... if that's what it takes to get what he wants.

You stroll around thinking 12 years of martial arts training or that 6-week self-defense course or the latest flavor-of-the-month fighting video gives you the edge you need against someone like this.

Wake up!

**You are hopelessly training techniques** (then praying they work) against someone who never "trained" for you. How many criminals in federal pens spent years sweating through JKD workouts before committing their crime? How many are Jujitsu experts?

None. They excel at just one thing: doin' it. No training, no practice, no techniques. And these criminals certainly follow no 'rules'. So why squander years fooling yourself with something that only works "if everyone plays by the rules"?

**These are the facts:** 98% of us, caught in an unavoidable violent attack (even those with years of training), would never consider doing "whatever it takes" to survive — like gouging our attacker's eyes — even if they were the only targets available, and... even if it was the only means of saving our own life.

That's why TFT® teaches both mind and body to

act in unison, training you for the real threat in your life... criminal violence.

It shows you how to deal with the ultra violence of a life-or-death confrontation (understand it's very easy to ramp this down to fit a lesser situation but it's impossible to ramp up to a "killing-set" if you've never trained for it. By the way, is this you?).

Make no mistake... Larkin doesn't advocate violence. TFT® just de-mystifies it. He's often quoted...

## "Violence Is Rarely The Answer. But When It Is... It's The Only Answer."

Look... others in Soldier of Fortune try to impress you with how bad they are, their accomplishments in the "hidden world" you aren't privy to, their guru status.

TFT® isn't about that. **It's not about an individual, a personality... or a guru.**

**It's about a system... one focused totally on you!**

**Make no bones about it:** Larkin's track record is impressive. He's currently training units from the top echelons of federal law enforcement and military special operations groups. It's not surprising since he comes from that world and is well known there. But since everyone in Soldier of Fortune tries to claim this you'll rarely hear him talking about it.

He's an awesome communicator, fabulous trainer, and amazingly approachable for someone with his abilities and credentials. And he's trained 100's of CEOs and others in high-risk positions around the world — all very real people.

But why is this so important?

## Why is TFT® being sought out in all these other arenas?

**Because it works!** Because you "get it" immediately... as soon as you experience it. There's no waiting. It's usable instantly... and it stays with you forever, even if you never practice it again.

Take fear. Experience a TFT® training and part way through this gigantic light bulb explodes in your brain. Boom... you get it... you understand why there's no reason to be fearful in any type of confrontation again. Fear is simply gone... instantly... and forever (by the way it's not magic, you've got the ability inside you right now).

**Here's what TFT® is about:** the key to the system lies in the fact there are two... and only two... overriding principles that determine the outcome of any physical confrontation. Combine these with three supporting methodologies that form the foundation of every fighting system on the planet and you have a complete system for handling any violent confrontation. With this information you can look at anything that's out there... including your own training... and know immediately if it's worth keeping.

*"It was the most effective five days of training in hand-to-hand and hand-to-weapon that I and anyone else had ever experienced." Brian (last name withheld), US Border Patrol*

Larkin just got back from talking to over 600 CEO's in Europe. These folks are eating his stuff up because TFT® principles and methodology are as effective in the 'combative' world of business as they are in a truly lethal fight, and for the exact same reason... **RESULTS.**

What really excites Larkin is the fact that if these people can get this much from his material, imagine how much more someone like you can learn... a

dedicated reader of Soldier of Fortune magazine who is really into finding and applying a system that is quickly learned and deadly effective. If all these other folks are seeking him out, shouldn't you be too?

Look, Larkin is swamped and realizes he can't begin to reach everyone. While he'd love to have you as a member of his organization and to take part in his live training, he realistically understands few will be able to do this. Bootcamps run \$2,000.00 while international events start at \$10,000.00. And personal training for small 2- to 4-person sessions is \$20,000.00 and more.

That's why he's created a special Guide called *The Two Key Principles Used To Win Every War, Battle And Streetfight... And How You Can Exploit Their Devastating Power Today.*

Not some sales letter in disguise, this is truly a way for you to take at least a step towards learning the basics of TFT® and applying its principles today.

In the Guide, Larkin covers things like:

- **The secret to success in any confrontation or fight. Understand this principle... and you win. Without it... you lose. It's as simple as that.**
- Why it's a huge mistake to train as if you can predict your attacker's next move... *even though everyone keeps trying to do it.*
- **Why focusing on a technique or methodology hands the sociopathic criminal an overwhelming advantage... each and every time.**
- Why defeating an assailant has nothing to do with your size, strength, speed, sex, stamina or athleticism... and *nothing whatsoever to do with years of practice or difficult movements.*

*"I've ordered video's from names like (withheld) and respect them and their ideas. But you have given me a logical system that I can train and do despite an artificial hip and other chronic injuries as a result of 33½ yrs of firefighting." John Carmody, Norfolk, VA*

- **Why you can't learn a hodgepodge collection of lethal techniques and expect to recall even one of them (let alone the one you need) in a life-or-death struggle.**

If you've spent years training techniques but still aren't sure of what might happen face-to-face with an assailant, if you can't imagine why physical skills are not critical to success in a determined sociopathic attack, if you long ago realized those silly fighter-of-the-month techniques weren't the answer to anything, then you owe it to yourself to get his Guide.

**Here is how you can get one:** Larkin is distributing 250 of these Guides. You may request one Free copy by calling toll-free (888) 803-0504 and leaving your name and address on his voicemail. He'll have the Guide sent to you the very next day. Since it's voicemail you can call 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. Additional copies of the Guide are just \$9 plus shipping. But again, he'll send you one copy FREE.

A lot of folks will blow off this offer as just another in the endless stream of secretive, technique-based, guru-led programs. Don't make that mistake. It doesn't cost you even a cent to prove to yourself the validity of what you've just read.

You've read this far and know this makes sense. **Call (888) 803-0504 and request your FREE Guide now** while they're still available. © 2003 Hurlay and Whittington-s





**Inside**

# The Ring

BY BILL GERTZ AND ROWAN SCARBOROUGH

## Market Bombings

**U.S.** Central Command has come to a tentative conclusion that Saddam Hussein's regime deliberately bombed two markets in Baghdad during the war to create civilian deaths it blamed on the alliance.

The conclusion is based on more than the oddity that two markets happened to be bombed during business hours within two days of each other. The Sha'ab Market exploded 26 March, the Nasser on 28 March. The conclusion also goes beyond the fact that the United States picked up intelligence reports before the war that the Ba'ath Party planned to bomb Shi'ite neighborhoods and blame it on the allies.

The command has studied a wide variety of satellite images of the markets, before and after the explosions. The damage is *inconsistent* with either a Tomahawk missile or a 2,000-pound satellite-guided bomb that were sent to Baghdad during that time. Instead, the damage is *consistent* with a homemade bomb and a small munition.

"We do not believe we did that," said a senior allied officer. "The supposition now is that it was self-inflicted as a propaganda thing. They blew up a bomb in their market for propaganda."

The officer said commanders have looked at aircraft sorties that day over Baghdad and believe they can account for every dispensed munition.

"The images that we have looked at of the damage looks more like a garden variety car bomb," said the officer. "Both markets had bomb signatures that did not look like death from above."

### Update

We reported in recent issues about problems manning the Air Force's ultramodern Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at Prince Sultan Air Base in Saudi Arabia. An internal Air Force report told of personnel shortages and a general lack of experience by people rotating in and out. It also said the Saudis kept limits on the number of CAOC troops manning the supercomputers that manage a complex air campaign.

The Air Force told us at the time that the problems were being fixed.

Operation Iraqi Freedom seemed to prove the point. The center managed one of the most intricate air wars ever. Early

statistics indicate few munitions went astray. Only one fixed-wing aircraft was definitely shot down by hostile fire — an A-10 Thunderbolt flying close-air support over Baghdad in the war's final days.

The Saudis are politically sensitive about their role in the war. They did not allow their airstrips to launch strike missions.

But they were relatively open about the fact that the CAOC hosted the air war nerve center. No reporters were allowed, but Brig. Gen. Ron Rand, the Air Force's chief spokesman, set up camp at Prince Sultan base and sent out press releases noting specific bombing missions. Lt. Gen. T. Michael Moseley, Central Command's top air boss, held a video press conference from the base, giving it more exposure.

On 2 April, the Air Force issued talking points to officers to educate them.

"The CAOC is a modern weapon system that gives the Combined Forces Air Component Commander a powerful and unique C2 [command and control] asymmetric advantage over the Iraqi regime and military," the "Aim Points" handout says.

### Speicher Update

A spokeswoman for the family of missing Navy pilot Capt. Michael Scott Speicher tells us the U.S. military is not doing enough to resolve the fate of the only missing serviceman from the 1991 Persian Gulf war.

Cindy A. Laquidara, the spokeswoman, said all the Pentagon will say about the case is that it is still looking in Iraq for people or documents that may shed light on the case.

"The search for Scott is more deserving of staffing than the search for weapons of mass destruction," Mrs. Laquidara said. "It's more time-critical, and it's a great debt that we have to our servicemen."

"We're asking it be given the highest priority," she said.

Asked about the hunt for Capt. Speicher, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld said earlier this week: "If and when we have anything to announce, we will. We, needless to say, have teams of people who have very much focused on the question of prisoners of war."

Mr. Rumsfeld said there has been "some good success



thus far" and that "we are working on the problems and hoping that we'll have success."

Capt. Speicher was declared killed in action in January 1991 after his F-18 was shot down over Baghdad. After intelligence reports indicated he survived the shoot-down, he was reclassified twice, the final time to "missing-captured."

### Diego Bombers

The Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia has played a major unsung role in military operations in Iraq. We obtained some photographs of B-2 and B-52 bombers on Diego Garcia showing Air Force operations.

The B-2 was not around for Desert Storm, nor was much of the Navy's and Air Force's ability to drop precision-guided weapons. That put tremendous pressure on air-planners to husband resources. Only the F-117 stealth bomber could penetrate downtown Baghdad in the early days.

But in Operation Iraqi Freedom, the B-2 Stealth bomber allowed planners to send massive firepower over the capital from the first night of the conflict.

### Palace Paper

An officer who was inside one of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's many palaces says they don't have all the com-



*This ultra-rare photo shows a U.S. B-52 (top) taking-off from tiny Diego Garcia, alongside a taxiing B-2 Stealth bomber. Due to differing missions, Main Operating Bases (MOBs) and additional factors these aircraft are almost never seen together.*

forts of home.

"Gold-plated bathrooms are nice, but the toilet paper is not up to our standards," the officer said.

Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough are Pentagon reporters. Gertz can be reached at 202.636.3274; or by E-Mail at [bgertz@washingtontimes.com](mailto:bgertz@washingtontimes.com). Scarborough can be contacted at 202.636.3208; or by E-Mail at [rscarborough@washingtontimes.com](mailto:rscarborough@washingtontimes.com).

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**A**merica's anti-terror campaign in Afghanistan, which began in October 2001, has been dubbed the Super Bowl of Special Operations Forces (SpecOps). Army Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Air Force Special Tactics teams and British and Australian Special Air Service Operators — even CIA paramilitary teams (some two dozen personnel) — did the lion's share of the work to topple the fundamentalist Taliban regime and to "drain the swamp" that served as a breeding ground for the al-Qaeda terrorist network.

But if Afghanistan was the SpecOps Super Bowl, Iraq has proven to be the commando Olympics. Perhaps nowhere else have SpecOps forces done so many different kinds of missions for so long and played such a pivotal role in the collapse of a totalitarian regime and its army of protectors.

A top Pentagon official noted at a press briefing: "It's probably the most effective and widest use of special operations forces in recent history, clearly."

During the Afghan campaign, Special Operators executed their core competencies, namely direct action and liaison with native forces. CIA operatives and Army Special Forces teams infiltrated Afghanistan within a few weeks of the al-Qaeda attack on the United States to team up with the rag-tag — but no less battled-hardened — Northern Alliance forces to whip them into the kind of shape that would prove ultimately decisive against the Taliban — once and for all.

SpecOps Forces did their liaison and direct action jobs superbly — even tossing in a rescue operation to exfiltrate several Christian missionaries held captive for months by the Taliban in Kabul. The Special Operators broke new ground with innovative use of air power as both a tactical and strategic lever for victory.

If Afghanistan can be called successful, Iraq could be called a slam-dunk. The SpecOps teams that slipped into the north of Iraq, well before the Bush Administration began its United Nations dance, were there to pull together rival Kurdish factions and forge a fighting force that could put pressure on Saddam Hussein's Ba'athist regime, if not sweep it out of Northern Iraq all together. CIA operatives had been active in the area since the end of Operation Desert Storm, so the ground was fertile for the Special Operators who flew in from Turkey to ply their dark trade.

When hostilities become imminent,



# SpecOps

## An Overview Of How





REUTERS/Australian Defense Force Photographer

*Australian SAS Operators take part in an operation to find and secure 51 Iraqi Air Force Mig fighter aircraft found at an undisclosed location in western Iraq, 18 April 2003.*

Air Force Combat Controller teams, specialists at calling in airstrikes, flowed into the region to act as forward spotters for the Kurdish *Peshmerga* fighters organized weeks earlier by the Green Berets. The northern front was set.

Meanwhile, commando teams — including British SAS troops — infiltrated northwestern and western Iraq from forward bases in Jordan and possibly Syria to cut communications lines along the border and to neutralize Iraqi mobile SCUD missile launches. The specter of a chemical-laden SCUD attack on Tel Aviv put sharp focus on this portion of the SpecOps mission. Additionally, observation posts were scouted and marked for destruction and airfields surveilled for a quick take-down when the balloon finally went up.

In the south, teams reconned border crossings, the Ramaylah oil fields and the ports at Um Qasr and Basra. The early infiltration of Special Operators of all stripes into Iraq's desert wadis and city rooftops proved vital in "shaping the battlefield" for conventional forces to launch their assault unimpeded.

That assault began 20 March when Marine and Army Cavalry units pierced Iraq's border with Kuwait and thrust northward to Baghdad. The first shot in the war, of course, was the surprise assault on a Saddam hideout in the capitol spotted at the last minute on 19 March. Some reports indicate that SpecOps Forces, hunkering down in a Baghdad OP, played a role in the strike.

During combat operations, SpecOps units sprang into lethal action. Forward observation posts were destroyed, airfields were seized in the west and the north, and communications lines were severed. In the south, SpecOps troops and Marine Reconnaissance forces captured oil fields, preventing their sabotage, and protecting the vital revenue stream for the Iraqi people.

In the south, Navy SEAL teams operating alongside elite Polish special operations forces seized the port of Umm Qasr, a key transshipment point for Iraqi oil. Soon after, the SEALs and their British and Australian counterparts secured the port, eliminated Iraqi holdouts and de-mined its waters with specially trained dolphins. Within days, the port was ready for ships to unload humanitarian aid.

# In Iraq

BY CHRISTIAN LOWE

## They Saved the Day



West of Baghdad, Aussie SAS Operators also discovered more than 50 buried Soviet-made Migs, along with a chemical-proof bunker and a huge cache of anti-aircraft guns and munitions.

Meanwhile, Reconnaissance Marines pounced on the Ramaylah oil field just north of the Kuwaiti border, one of Iraq's largest, to root out Iraqi saboteurs and dismantled explosives at oil wells rigged for demolition. The field was key to ensuring a stable revenue flow for a liberated Iraq to get in its feet.

As the Army's 3/7 Cavalry unit screamed northward, less than a week into the war, U.S. SpecOps teams were already taking out Iraqi Army observation posts in key cities north of the advance, including Najaf, an important crossroads on the approaches to Baghdad. At the same time, Army Green Berets and Air Force Combat Controllers helped open a northern front, aiding the 173rd Airborne Brigade's 1,000-man parachute drop on the Bashar airfield near Kirkuk, the largest U.S. airborne operation since World War II.

### SpecOps Owned It

As other SpecOps teams took down two airfields in western Iraq, bases reportedly used to store and launch long-range missiles, CENTCOM deputy operations chief Brigadier General Vincent Brooks declared in a 31 March briefing that U.S. forces controlled the entire western portion of Iraq. At the time, there were no known conventional forces operating there. SpecOps owned it.

On 1 April, after coverage of the war had turned sour and armchair generals began loudly second-guessing the war plan, Special Operators came up with a big win for the coalition. In a daring overnight raid, Navy SEALs, supported by Army Rangers and Marines, swept into a hospital in Nasiriyah and snatched Private First Class Jessica Lynch who had been held captive for more than a week. The rescue was the first successful POW snatch in recent history.

A day later, another team raided a key presidential palace 55 miles south of Baghdad, called Tharthar, netting a treasure trove of intelligence information. Still other SpecOps teams secured the Handitha dam, which war planners worried could be blown by Iraqi forces in a last-ditch effort to bog down the U.S. advance northward.

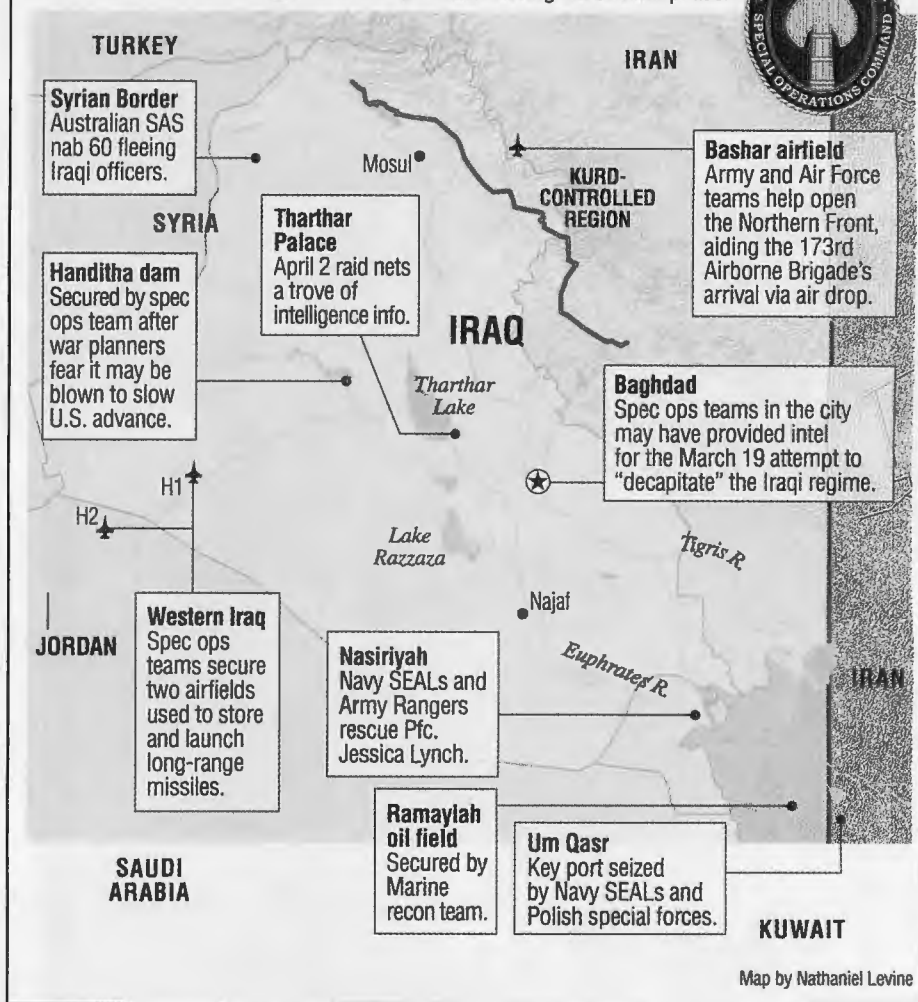
Also, they became menacing hackers, unleashing viruses to immobilize enemy computers at numerous locations. Chinese-built fiber optics communications were tapped into, allowing friendly forces to monitor Iraqi military comms.

Iraqi personnel assets were recruited to provide information on the whereabouts of Saddam Hussein and his coterie of henchmen.

As conventional forces swept into Baghdad, SpecOps shifted from hobbling the Ba'athist regime, to hunting down

# Infiltrating Iraq

Locations in the country where special operations forces were active during the combat phase.



Map by Nathaniel Levine

— including assassinating — its members and personnel from the Republican Guard. Teams scoured the capitol city and towns in northern and southern Iraq for party leaders, top scientists and intelligence officials.

Australian SAS troops got into the act near the Syrian border, nabbing 60 senior Iraqi military officers trying to skip the border with \$600,000.

But as the commandos continue to collect information on chemical and biological weapons and hunt down Saddam and his henchmen, they have also shifted to security and stability operations, guarding key commercial sites in Baghdad and delivering medical aid to hospitals badly short of supplies. As the shooting war winds down, Special Operations Forces will no doubt continue their covert missions, finding new information on terrorist groups with ties to the Hussein regime and ensuring that the dictator's legacy has been securely locked into distant history.

As we go to press, American SpecOps Operators have captured a half-brother of Saddam Hussein, Barzan Ibrahim Hasan, whom Brigadier General Vincent Brooks says is a top advisor to Saddam who possesses intimate knowledge of the regime's inner workings.

As one U.S. Army official commented, "Our conventional forces would never have gone this far so quickly without them [SpecOps Operators]."

Christian Lowe is a staff writer at Army Times Publishing Company.



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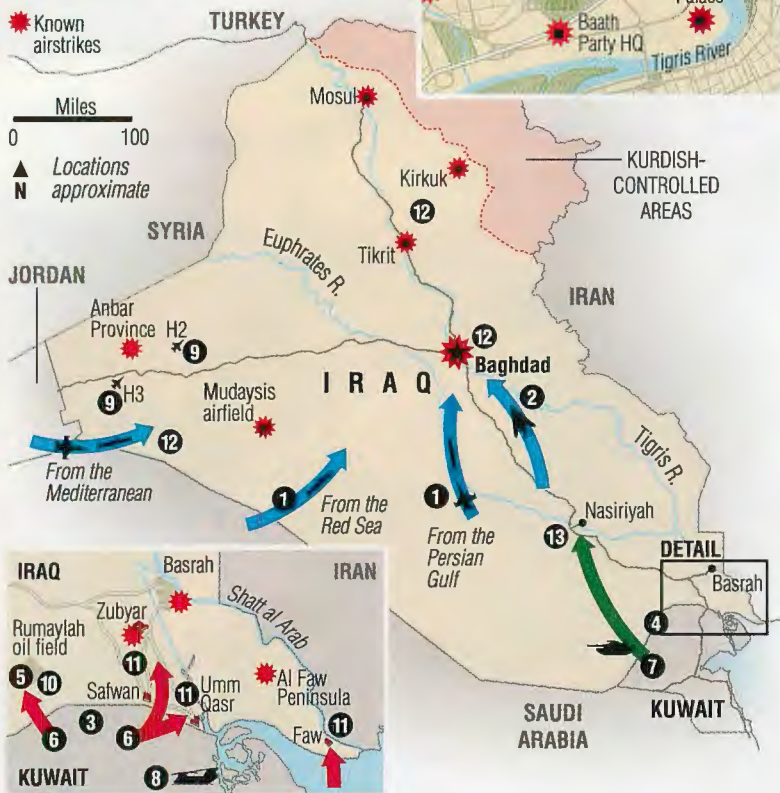
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# March To Baghdad

## THE WAR IN IRAQ: OPENING SALVOS

Key military actions in the first two days of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



### KEY EVENTS *Sequence approximate; all times local*

#### Thursday, March 20

- 1 Tomahawk and aircraft strikes begin at 5:30 a.m.
- 2 Two F-117As drop two 2,000-pound bunker-busting bombs on a site in Baghdad.
- 3 Patriot anti-missile batteries intercept at least two Iraqi tactical ballistic missiles. A third strikes near Camp Commando, causing no damage.
- 4 17 Iraqis surrender at the border, becoming the first prisoners of war.
- 5 Iraqis set fire to less than 10 wells in the Rumaylah oil field.
- 6 1st Marine Expeditionary Force units cross border with mission to capture southern oil

fields and ports.

- 7 The Army's 3rd Infantry Division crosses into Iraq from Kuwait heading for Baghdad.
- 8 CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter crashes in Kuwait south of Umm Qasr, killing 12 U.S. and British Marines.

#### Friday, March 21

- 9 Coalition forces seize H2 and H3 airfields in western Iraq.
- 10 A Marine is shot and killed during the capture of an oil field, the first combat death of the war.
- 11 U.S. and British Marines capture ports of Faw and Umm Qasr and the towns of Safwan

- and Zubayar. One Marine is killed during the capture of Umm Qasr.
- 12 "Shock and awe" campaign begins, involving more than 700 coalition aircraft and at least 320 sea-launched cruise missiles. Navy planes flying from carriers in the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean Sea joined Air Force planes in targeting cities of Baghdad, Kirkuk, Mosul and Tikrit.
- 13 The 3rd Brigade of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division encounters artillery fire in the evening as it nears Nasiriyah, a key city on the main road to Baghdad.

NATHANIEL LEVINE, TIMES STAFF

## 3/7 Cav Lays Track Through Iraq

BY ADAM GEIBEL

From wire service reports, originally appearing on Jim Dunnigan's "Strategypage," online at [www.strategypage.com](http://www.strategypage.com). Reprinted with permission.

One Cavalry Squadron has been tearing-up the Iraqi armor fleet with remarkable success. The 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, is the Divisional Cavalry for the 3rd Infantry Division. The unit motto, "Garryowen," is a reminder of the unit's initial service on America's western frontier during the Indian Wars. The unit was originally constituted on 28 July 1866 in the regular Army as a Company "C," 7th Cavalry Regiment and has continued in service since then. After decades in Germany during the Cold War, the 3rd Squadron was reassigned on 16 February 1996 to the 3rd Infantry Division and activated at Fort Stewart, GA.

The role of divisional cavalry is primarily out front or on the flanks, screening the parent unit from and looking for the enemy. One of the first contacts was with Iraqi irregulars on 23 March and after responding with artillery, the Cavalry overran a pink Japanese-made pickup truck with a light machinegun. While cavalry medics treated the black-uniformed driver, an embedded CNN reporter noticed that the vehicle had a New York Police Department bumper sticker pasted up on the right corner of the windshield.

"A" Troop was leading the 3rd



## KEY EVENTS

The second week of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

- Coalition airfield
  - Airstrikes
  - City under coalition control
  - Republican Guard Divisions (about 8,000 troops)
- Locations of troops approximate.

Miles  
0 50

**March 25-26** Vicious sandstorms across central Iraq slow the advance of the 3rd Infantry Division and I Marine Expeditionary Force.

**March 25-26** Navy cruise missiles from warships in the Red Sea.

### DOWNTOWN BAGHDAD



Aircraft sorties from the carriers Harry S. Truman and Theodore Roosevelt and cruise missiles from warships in the Mediterranean Sea.

**March 26:** About 1,000 paratroopers from the Army's 173rd Airborne Brigade drop into northern Iraq and secure an airfield near Bashur. Troops of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division also are in the area.

**March 22** Coalition forces bomb villages in northern Iraq controlled by Ansar al-Islam, which U.S. officials say is linked to al-Qaida.

**March 27** A column of Iraqi armored vehicles attempting to leave Baghdad is destroyed by coalition airstrikes.

**March 27** The I Marine Expeditionary Force engages in a series of sharp skirmishes with Iraqi forces between Nasiriyah and Kut.

**KARBALA**  
**March 24** An Army Apache attack helicopter crashes near the city. Its two crew members are captured by Iraqi forces.  
**March 25** 3rd Infantry Division forces engage in a sharp firefight with elements of the Iraqi Medina Division near Karbala.

**March 25** The Army's 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, engages in a daylong running firefight with Iraqi forces in the vicinity of Najaf. For the first time, two M-1A1 Abrams tanks are lost to enemy fire, but all crewmen escape.

**March 26** An Air Force F-16 fires a missile that hits a U.S. Patriot missile battery about 30 miles south of Najaf.

**March 27** Near Nasiriyah, U.S. troops secure Tallil air base, the largest airport outside Baghdad, and erect a sign that reads, "Bush International Airport."

Aircraft sorties from carriers Abraham Lincoln, Constellation and Kitty Hawk and cruise missiles from warships in the Persian Gulf.

**OUTSIDE IRAQ**  
**March 22** Six British troops and a U.S. Navy officer die in a midair collision of two British Royal Navy helicopters over the northern Persian Gulf.  
**March 22** One U.S. Army officer dies and several others are wounded by a grenade attack in a base camp of the 101st Airborne Division in Kuwait near the Iraqi border. A U.S. Air National Guard officer later dies from injuries suffered in the attack.  
**March 23** A Patriot missile shoots down a British Royal Air Force Tornado GR4 fighter jet near the Kuwait-Iraq border.  
**March 24** U.S. Patriot missiles destroy two Iraqi missiles fired into Kuwait.  
**March 27** A Patriot missile shoots down an Iraqi missile fired at Kuwait from southern Iraq.

**NASIRIYAH**  
**March 23** Nine Marines die in a tank surrender by Iraqi forces near the city.  
**March 23** A supply convoy of the Army's 507th Maintenance Company heading to link with forward U.S. forces takes a wrong turn near Nasiriyah and is ambushed by Iraqis. Two Americans are killed, three are taken prisoner and eight others are listed as missing by U.S. officials.  
**March 24** Two Marine reservists drown after falling into the Saddam Canal near Nasiriyah.  
**March 26** Elements of I Marine Expeditionary Force find 3,000 new chemical protective suits in an Iraqi hospital.  
**March 27** Marines engage in house-to-house fighting with Iraqi forces, possibly Republican Guard troops.

**BASRA**  
**March 25** British forces destroy 19 Iraqi tanks in two engagements near the city.  
**March 27** British forces destroy 14 Iraqi tanks attempting to break out of Basra.

**SAUDI ARABIA**  
Aircraft sorties from Kuwait, Qatar, Diego Garcia and other bases in the region.

Sources: Defense Department, USA Today, Associated Press

NATHANIEL LEVINE, TIMES STAFF

Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment in a growing sandstorm on the night of the 24th, strung out for 15 to 25 miles beside the western bank of the Euphrates, when they ran into about 200 Iraqis dug-in on either side of the road. The Iraqis opened-up with small arms, mortars and machine guns. The six Paladin 155mm self-propelled howitzers attached to the Squadron fired one round each at the Iraqi positions and a pair of A-10s followed up with strafing runs. By 2130 hours, the road was clear again.

The Squadron made contact against just before midnight. At the edge of Al Faysaliyyh, just west of the Euphrates, dozens of militiamen hit the column with RPG and machine-

gun fire. The cavalry drove into a "machine-gun alley," with rounds coming at them from both sides of the road. The squadron commander's Humvee driver emptied two magazines and discharged his M203 twice during that ride.

The column dispersed, some elements taking to side streets while the lead unit headed for a bridge. However, it collapsed under an Abrams M1-A1 and although the tank dropped 8 feet, the crew escaped uninjured. The squadron commander then had no choice but to turn his unit around, at night and under fire.

In the darkness and confusion, two tanks and a fuel truck rolled into ditches but there were no serious casualties. The







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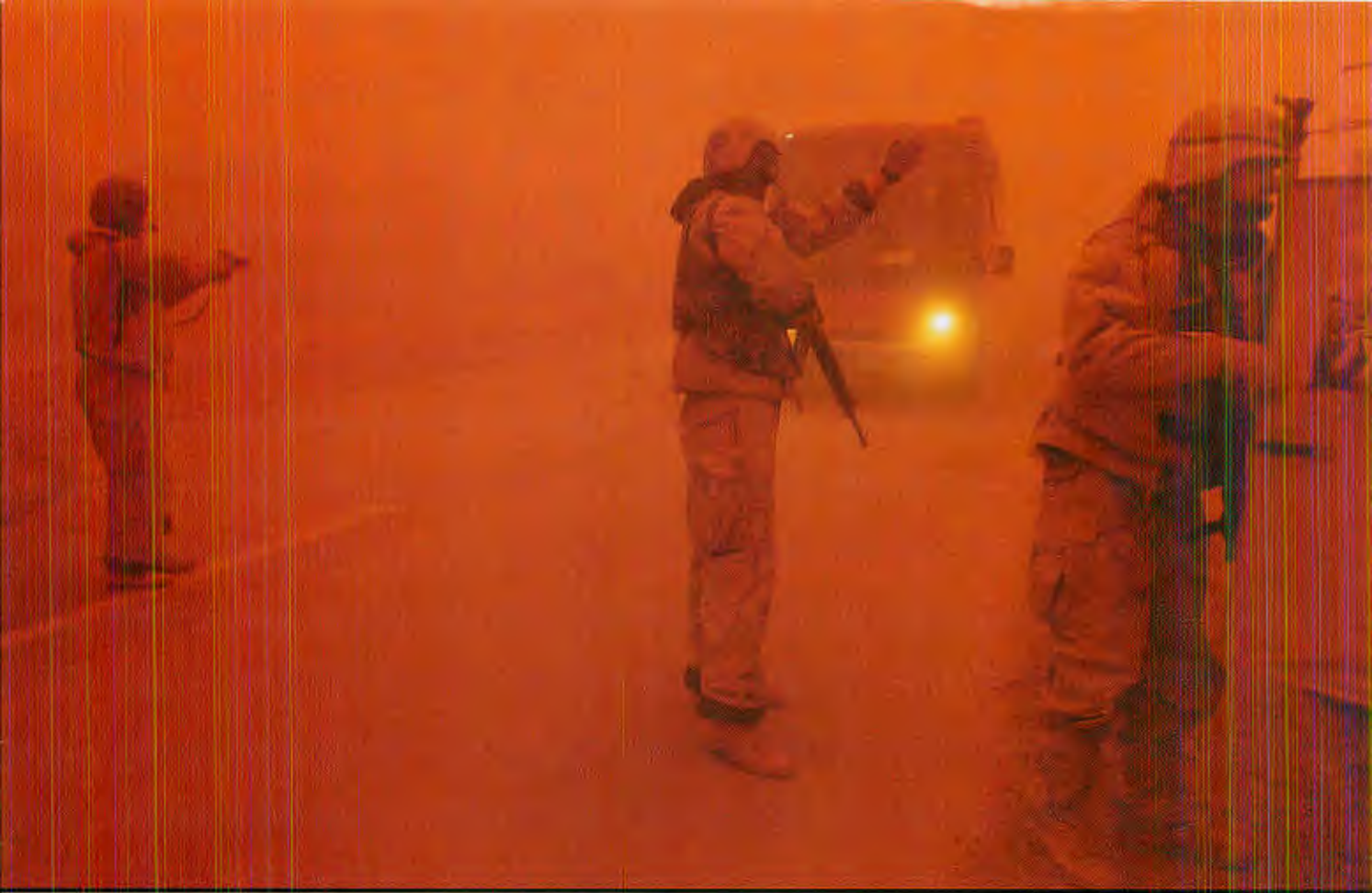
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morning of the 28th and another 3rd Infantry Division unit replaced them on the front line.

At the end of five days of fighting, most of the 3/7th Cavalry was gathered at Najaf and “black” (nearly expended) on 7.62mm M240 machine-gun ammunition and fuel. Some vehicles had only 30 minutes’ of fuel left, although the Squadron had used only about one-eighth of its main-gun tank rounds. After rearming and refueling on the 28th, the 3/7 Cavalry was ready for the final drive on Baghdad. By the end of the month the 7th Cavalry had taken up positions in an arc, protecting the western flank of the 3rd Infantry Division while it moved on Hilla (about 50 miles south of the southern suburbs of Baghdad).

*A hasty 3/7 Cavalry checkpoint near Najaf, with severely reduced visibility due to a sandstorm.*

At the time, no one knew why they hadn’t made contact with the Republican Guard’s armored units and while Saddam’s T-72s were on the Air Force’s hit list, the squadron was sent forward to sniff them out. On 4 April, the 3/7 Cavalry was screening the west flank of other 3rd ID units storming the Baghdad International Airport. The U.S. Air Force had identified 22 stationary T-72s (a battalion’s worth) 3 or 4 kilometers in front of the Cavalry.

“A” Troop was given the mission of taking out the enemy

## First M1A1s Lost To Enemy Fire

At dusk on the 25th, “B” Troop (“the Bonecrushers”) was caught in an ambush of the near As Samawah, on the west bank of the Euphrates River. The two Abrams tanks were hit by what their crews first thought was fire from an Iraqi truck-mounted Anti-Tank Gun. While all of Sergeant First Class Curtis Anderson’s crew got clear, the driver of Staff Sergeant Charles Kilgore’s tank was trapped. Private First Class Adam Small’s hatch was jammed and fire started to lick at the ammunition around him. Squadron master gunner Sgt. First Class Javier Camacho moved his tank up to help and, along with Sergeant Jeremiah Gallegos and Sgt. First Class Steven Newby, pried open Small’s hatch. Master Gunners are resident experts on fixing temperamental tanks and Bradleys, often capable of working minor miracles.

The same Iraqi weapon system also blew-up a Bradley. Both tanks and the Bradley were total write-offs, but all

three crews survived.

Intelligence sources began

to warn Coalition troops that black-clad three-man Iraqi commando teams (“Saddam Fedayeen”) were traveling in Nissan pickup trucks along the 3rd Infantry Division flanks, launching broadside attacks from several kilometers away using the AT-14 system. The theory was that Cavalry’s vehicles were killed by an AT-14 “Kornet,” a laser beam-riding missile with automatic command-to-line of sight (SACLOS) guidance supposedly able to penetrate 1,100 to 1,200 millimeters of armor from 3.5 kilometers away.

The Lima Army Tank Plant began working around-the-clock to find a “fix” for the weak spot (the exhaust and air intake vents at the rear hull). By 12 April 2003, the engineers had designed, built and shipped 20 sets of steel louvers that fit over the vents in the rear of the tanks, allowing air to flow while deflecting missiles or grenades.

— A. G.







tanks and advanced down the six-lane highway with 10 M1A1s and some M2 Bradleys. They saw the Air Force engaging one element on the North side of the road, but not a second element on the south side. This group was dug-in to hull-down positions, with barbed-wire in front.

Despite being outnumbered two to one, "A" Troop engaged and from 800 to 1,000 meters away, the Cav opened fire with their Abrams tanks' 120mm main guns, while most of the Iraqi 125mm main gun return fire fell short or flew too high. The M1s systematically destroyed the Iraqi armor. Even one of "A" Troops Bradleys destroyed three T-72s, while a second scored two T-72 kills.

One of the Iraqi main gun rounds exploded 25 meters from Troop Commander Captain Clay Lyle's tank, rattling it around some. The Iraqis also returned fire with RPGs and a few artillery shells, but inflicted no casualties.

As dusk approached, "A" Troop pulled back to allow their supporting artillery and close-air-support jets to pound the Iraqi positions. By 1800 hours, "A" Troop

*Continued on page 67*

## White Flags Often Preceded Enemy Fire




The American drive was faced with dozens of incidents where Saddam's Fedayeen used underhanded tactics and the Cavalry was determined not to allow themselves to be dragged into a dirty war. The Fedayeen moved ammunition in civilian trucks, held weapons to their own people's heads and pretended to be doctors with asthmatic children. They had also pretended to surrender, then opened fire at point-blank range. The recommendation was that soldiers err on the side of caution and put all civilians down before they got close. Lieutenant Colonel Ferrell had told his Cavalry troop commanders that they would "fight fairly, we will fight honestly and we will abide by the laws of land warfare."

The unit was about 80 miles outside of Baghdad on the morning of the 25th, near the village of Al Faysaliyah, when a young Iraqi boy was caught in a crossfire. An unarmed Iraqi approached the troopers and begged for aid, but the unit had just taken fire from nearby buildings. If the boy's father would bring the child out, the troopers could give him first-aid.

Embedded photographer Warren Zinn snapped a shot of Private First Class Joseph Dwyer, a Squadron medic, carrying a wounded Iraqi out of harm's way. The photograph would come to symbolize America's presence in Iraq. Dwyer, who enlisted because of the terrorist attack on 11 September 2001, scooped-up the child and rushed him to safety. Three of Dwyer's brothers are police officers in or near New York City. — A. G.

## KEY EVENTS

The third full week of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

-  Airstrikes
-  Army's 3rd Infantry Division
-  I Marine Expeditionary Force

**April 8-10** An Air Force A-10 "Warthog" tank-killer goes down near Baghdad international airport, apparently from an Iraqi surface-to-air missile. The pilot ejects safely and is rescued.

**April 6** The Army's 3rd Infantry Division expands northward on the western edge of Baghdad and secures major roads leading out of the Iraqi capital.

Baghdad international airport

**April 6** A U.S. C-130 transport plane touches down at Baghdad's airport, the first publicly acknowledged landing of a U.S. aircraft in the city.

**April 5** Element of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division consolidates control over Baghdad's international airport and sends an armoured probe into the southernmost neighborhood of the capital, launching a "battle for Baghdad."

Members of the U.S. Army prepare to storm a building after they came under fire on 20 April 2003 in Baghdad. U.S. Marines handed over control of the city to the U.S. Army.









**On** 28 March at 2200 hours the final bombardment of *Ansar al-Islam* ("Followers of Islam") headquarters in Iraq began. Ansar had been staging attacks against Kurdish villages and paramilitary forces, and was known to have been created and financed by al-Qaeda in cooperation with Saddam Hussein and possibly the Iranian government itself. Ansar had been created as the Iraqi wing of al-Qaeda's regional strategy in the Middle East to fight American influence, and was suspected to have a store of chemical and biological weapons.

U.S. Special Operations Forces had been waiting in the darkness with their *Pesh Merga* ("those who face death") Kurdish Allies. They waited in the darkness for more than three hours, and under cover of the aerial bombardment, crept forward to their assault positions. At midnight the word came and the SF charged up the mountain with the *Pesh Merga*.

It was the single largest Special Operation of the war, reportedly including a division of *Pesh Merga*, approximately 8,000 strong, along with up to 80-100 Special Operators from a joint task force set up expressly for this operation.

The Kurdish warriors had been fighting a guerrilla war against Saddam and his Ba'ath party for almost four decades, and were ready for some payback. Seven months before, U.S. Special Forces had reconned the area to pinpoint the locations of the Ansar cave headquarters.

Ansar was the organization created in the wake of 11 September 2001 to fight a Jihad against the West, as part of al-Qaeda's strategy to create an armed



*Pesh Merga volunteer fighters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) walk past burning corpses in a pickup next to a bridge in the village of Khazer 4 April 2003 on the edge of northern Iraq's Kurdish enclave.*

# Northern Iraq

SF and Kurdish *Pesh Merga* (PUK) Fighters Rout Al-Qaeda





# Firefight

BY VICTOR BLACK

uprising across the entire Middle East. It had launched a foiled assassination attempt against the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Prime Minister, Barham Salih, in April 2002, and was running guerrilla operations against both of the two parties that control Kurdistan, the PUK, and Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). It had seized local villages, forcing women into traditional dress and out of school, and censoring communications with the outside world. It launched drives to recruit local Kurds to fight against the U.S. and its Kurdish allies.

Ansar assassinated one of the founders of the PUK, Mr. Shawkat Haji Mushir on 8 February, as part of a reported collaborative effort with Saddam Hussein to rid the North of his political opponents in preparation for war with the U.S.

Ansar officers included members of Saddam Hussein's feared Mukhabarat Intelligence Service. The PUK and KDP had set up a joint anti-terrorist center in Erbil, and now, in a coalition with the U.S., were ready for revenge. The Pesh Merga fighters had been trained in schools started by U.S. Special Forces a decade previously and had been working with Special Operations forces for the past several months.

## Tough Times For Ansar

The Ansar positions had been under fire for two weeks. Much of the town of Komal below was flattened. The Ansar hilltop positions were rubble. More than 60 dead from the Komal Fundamentalist Group lay in the rubble with several Ansar fighters. Komal, which cooperated with Ansar by acting as a go-between with Kurdish allies of the U.S. by ostensibly maintaining official relations with them, had been virtually annihilated. SF had been directing the airstrikes with deadly precision while patrolling the roads outside the town. According to SF NCO's at the scene, Ansar positions in the town were "bombed flat, and then we moved in." Ansar had withdrawn to the mountains above the town, however, and the fight had just begun.

Airstrikes during the week-long battle were coordinated with Tomahawk missile launches from Naval platforms in the Red Sea. More than 40 Tomahawks were reportedly launched on 21 March, the first day of bombard-



ment. The Tomahawks hit dead-center on the hilltop redoubts commanding the road leading up into the mountains and Ansar headquarters. FA-18 fighter-bombers from the American Aircraft Carriers U.S.S. *Kitty Hawk*, U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* and U.S.S. *Constellation* launched hellfire missiles and dropped precision-guided munitions. B-52s from Diego Garcia maintained a devastating barrage from above, including GPS-guided high explosives aimed at terrorist centers in town, and anti-personnel cluster munitions and bunker-busting bombs directed at the mountains. These precision-guided bombs, while not as accurate as the Tomahawks, flattened town defensive positions and sent shockwaves rolling across the hillsides and through penetrated caves, instantly killing those inside.

The attack was supported by AC-130 gunships coordinated by U.S. Air Force Combat Control Teams (CTT) on the ground, raining a hail of 20MM and 105MM shells from the night sky. Approximately six U.S. Army Special Forces A-Teams from Task Force Viking led the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Pesh Merga fighters through the town and straight up the mountain, in a multi-pronged attack against the approximately 600 guerrillas trained in Iran and Afghanistan to fight for al-Qaeda. The Green Berets were supported by Air Force Combat CCTs and by miniature predator-like drones. The battle would last for three days. Most of the Ansar leadership had fled to Iran at this point, but they left behind a majority of their men to fight to their deaths.

What Ansar had not already fled during the aerial campaign put up stiff resistance, retreating to a second line of defense to exchange fire with the advancing U.S.-led coalition. Ansar fired their full arsenal of heavy weapons down on their attackers, including mortars, Katyusha rocket launchers, anti-tank, and anti-aircraft guns.

### A Trio Of Snipers "Smoked"

U.S. forces had to lug their heavy weapons up the mountain straight into the hail of lead and high explosives, since their thin-skinned vehicles could not survive the firefight. According to SF sources, they employed Barrett .50-caliber sniper rifles to "smoke" at least three Ansar snipers who stalled the initial attack for hours. SF followed up with 60mm mortars and Mark 19 20mm grenade launchers as they quickly took the first hilltops leading to the Shenerwin Mountains on the Iranian border.

By Saturday, the Ansar fighters had withdrawn to their third — and final — line of defense on the mountaintops, within site of watchful Iranian soldiers guarding the border who covered the retreat of several Ansar fighters from the Molla Khord checkpoint.

The following day the battle raged as the Pesh Merga employed RPGs, DSK 12.7mm machine guns, and 14.7 anti-aircraft guns to dislodge Ansar from the snowline. SF was able to bring up HMMWVs equipped with .50-caliber

*(below) Iraqi Kurdish fighters watch U.S. soldiers of the 173rd Airborne Brigade as they leave the airstrip in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-controlled town of Harir, north of Arbil, 29 March 2003 after U.S. forces began deploying in northern Iraq. (opposite, top) Fighter of PUK flashes victory sign to author as they march toward Kirkuk on 10 April 2003. As with most mature irreg-*

*ular forces, there was a commonality of weapons and spirit, but weapons and footgear were "whatever." (opposite, bottom) Female fighters of the PUK wave their green headbands in celebration of the storming of Kirkuk. Such volunteers are used for HQ and administrative personnel, police and intelligence work.*



AFP PHOTO/JOSEPH BARRAK





Victor Black



Victor Black



machine guns to support a joint assault on approximately 17 villages previously seized by Ansar when they set-up a local Taliban-style regime in the area last year. The villages included the border towns of Tovailah, Biareh, the headquarters of Ansar, and Sarget. Sarget is locally termed "Little Tora Bora" by the PUK, and was the location of a military training camp and the infamous poison factory identified by Secretary of State Colin Powell in February.

The firefight lasted another day, as SF and Pesh Merga engaged the enemy in intense close-quarter battle in the caves and crags of the mountains. By Monday, all the Ansar had been killed or fled to Iran.

More than 130 bodies were found at two sites; the remainder had fled into Iran with their leaders. U.S. forces discovered both biological and chemical weapons, including ricin and botulinum Toxin, as well as potassium cyanide, suicide vests of C4 explosive, and a variety of military supplies, weapons, and torture chambers in the mountain caves.

Thus ended Osama bin Laden's last — and best — chance to launch an immediate organized operation against the U.S. and its allies in Iraq or the Gulf. Al-Ansar had been formed post-11 September 2001, specifically to fight against the independent Kurdish governments established in Northern



*Iraqi freedom fighters in high spirits wave to author from one of the ubiquitous Toyota pickups that keep Arabian conflicts on wheels.*

Victor Black

Iraq under cover of the no-fly-zone at the 36th parallel. Their goal was to overthrow these governments and establish a fundamentalist regime and staging area to launch attacks throughout the Middle East.

Their attempt to reach their goal ended in disaster, at least this time.

#### Ansar's Brief History

Ansar took its inspiration from Osama bin Laden and Afghanistan, but the group has its roots in the Iran-Iraq

war of the 1980s. Iran provided aid to all anti-Saddam groups during this period, but it also created fundamentalist groups to supplant them and turn the Kurdish fighters into a tool for Iranian influence in Iraq. Fundamentalist fighters in Northern Iraq were organized by Osman Abdul Aziz during the late 1980s with Iranian assistance. Aziz was a Muslim intellectual and cleric imprisoned by Saddam for several years. Upon his release, in 1987, he immediately fled to Iran, where he organized the *Bizotnawa*, or Islamic Brotherhood. The *Bizotnawa* fractured and then reunited over the course of 15 years to become an instrument of al-Qaeda.

Secret cells formed inside the *Bizotnawa* with independent agendas. In 1995, *Islah* or "Reform" was formed inside *Bizotnawa*, but did not declare itself and separate until 1999. It was led by the notorious Mullah Keraker,

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now in prison in Norway.

In 1997, Kurdish *Hamas*, or "Enthusiasm," formed and split off and the Arabs formed a secret cell called *Markas* ("Center"). In 1999 Aziz died in Syria. His brother, Ali, succeeded him, but was not admired. Bizotnawa had lost its leadership. The Bizotnawa crumbled further. That same year *Islah* declared itself and split away. *Tawheed*, or "Unify" was formed and split off in 2000. Finally, *Komal*, or "Group" formed and split off. At this point there were six separate fundamentalist groups opposing Saddam, including the original Islamic Movement of Kurdistan, or Bizotnawa. Iran seemed to have lost control of the fundamentalist movement it had founded as it splintered. It would be re-united by Osama bin Laden, with the help of Saddam Hussein.

In October 2000 Mullah Keraker of *Islah* sent a delegation led by a Mullah Namu to Afghanistan to receive al-Qaeda training and ask permission to join with bin Laden. *Tawheed* sent an emissary to Afghanistan as well later the same month. Traveling the drug smuggling routes controlled by al-Qaeda, they came to meet with the new power of fundamentalist Islam. They were accepted, but ordered to reunite.

The unification of fundamentalist groups in Iraq coincided with bin Laden's attacks on the U.S., suggesting a comprehensive regional strategy to not only declare Jihad on America, but seize control of the oil-rich Gulf states to use as a power base.

Bin Laden sent a Lieutenant to lead the largely Arab *Markas*. In April, this Lieutenant, a Jordanian named Abu Abdul Rahman Al-Shami, was killed in a skirmish with the PUK. He was replaced by another bin Laden representative named Abu Zubair (also Jordanian). In July 2001 The *Tawheed* Front was formed from the union of *Hamas* and

*Tawheed*. Finally, *Markas* and the *Tawheed* Front were unified under bin Laden's control on 1 September 2001 with the creation of the *Jund-al-Islamiah*, or "Soldiers of Islam." They launched their first attack on PUK forces on 23 September, killing 43 in an ambush near the town of Halabja, the birthplace of Osma Aziz and the scene of Saddam Hussein's devastating chemical attack on the Kurds in 1988. In December 2001 all groups except *Komal*, which guarded the valley approach to the new base, unified under the banner of the *Ansar-al-Islamiah*.

The group began bringing in chemical and biological weapons and storing them in mountain bunkers. A "retired" officer from Iraq intelligence named Abu Wail took charge of the Iraqi Arabs in the group. At this point, Arabs from Saudi Arabia, Syria, Palestine, and Jordan, many of them with Afghanistan experience, made up over 50-75% of what was once a majority Kurdish organization. The group launched repeated operations against PUK fighters. On 2 April 2002, an *Ansar* hit team launched an unsuccessful assassination attempt on PUK Prime Minister Barham Salih, a key U.S. ally in favor of a democratic Iraq aligned with the West. *Ansar* has become bin Laden's arm in Iraq. The presence of Iraqi intelligence indicates a direct link between the two, long denied by Saddam.

The elimination of this group clearly demonstrates that ridding the world of Saddam Hussein will deprive Osama bin Laden of one more refuge, and bring us one step closer to winning the war on terror. This terror group was destroyed a week before the encirclement of Baghdad by democratic PUK fighters and U.S. Special Operations Forces.

*Ansar* was the main terrorist network in the region, with roots stretching from Afghanistan to Palestine. Osama bin

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Laden's economic power base came from the Afghan drug trade, and the bulk of his warriors came from Arab countries. So Ansar saw much of their financial backing coming from the poppy fields southeast of Kabul, while their fighters were drawn from the al-Shami states of Palestine, Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, plus several Iraqis of both Arab and Kurdish descent.

The discovery of Abu Wail's involvement gives credence to reports that Iraqi intelligence was working hand-in-glove with al-Qaeda. In addition, the Fedayeen and al-Khalq irregular forces working for Saddam also had representation in Ansar, and that was why Wail was there, according to PUK authorities.

According to CENTCOM, U.S. military intelligence "went over the area with a fine-toothed comb" looking for clues about al-Qaeda plans and organizational structure.

Special Operations Forces have played a key role in eliminating the terrorist threat, and has been keeping the heat on al-Qaeda across their area of operations. Clearly, Iraq had become a key component to these operations. Al-Qaeda may have sympathizers, but it cannot operate openly anywhere in a recognized nation-state. Iraq, like Afghanistan, was perfect for them because it was another failed state. Al-Qaeda will now be forced to take refuge with Syria and Iran, which may give shelter to fellow anti-Americans, but will not sympathize with their broader goals for a Sunni Islamic Caliphate, or universal Islamic state. After the Ansar rout, al-Qaeda and its allies will be permanently on the run, and will become a hunted terrorist organization, no longer a territory-controlling quasi-state.

The Revolution in Military Affairs described by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has reached the SF community, enabling America's elite to expand their reach beyond guerrilla warfare or surgical strikes. Now, a new joint-SF concept is able to direct major land campaigns as an alternative to regular Army forces, at least against an entrenched enemy. Unchallenged air superiority mandated that the Iraqis had to stay where they were. To advance or withdraw meant death for any convoy caught in the open. Without the necessity of conducting maneuver warfare, U.S. forces could concentrate limited armor and infantry against Baghdad, and SF could conduct the war against dug-in garrisons in the North.

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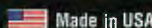
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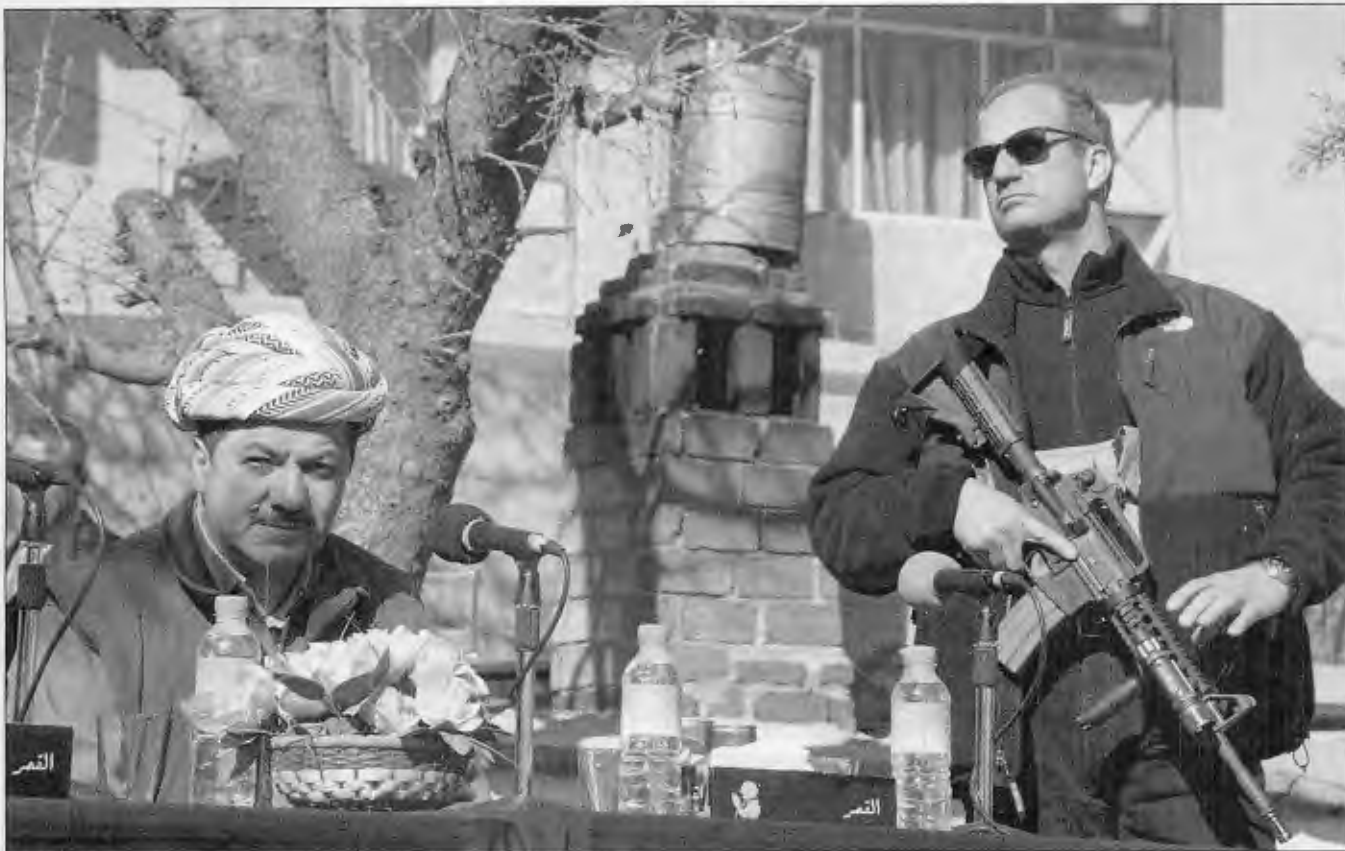
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Instead of principally relying on irregular forces trained and led by Green Berets, Army Special Operations Command is working hand-in-glove with Air Force pilots and their ground based counterparts. As seen in Mazar-i-Sharif, Konduz, Kabul, and countless battlefields throughout Afghanistan, the preferred weapon of Special Operations today are the Tomahawk missile and the B-52. Previously a sideshow in the SpecOps community, the U.S. Air Force CCTs proved themselves on the front line of combat. The CCTs undergo their own rigorous training program in survival, ground combat, and HALO/airborne operations. Unlike their Army SF counterparts, however, they are not focused on leading foreign troops, but on calling in death from above. They are the CAS experts putting steel on target far beyond the range of conventional artillery to support U.S. strategic objectives deep in denied territory.

Many in the Army have claimed for decades that the Air Force should be reunited with its parent organization to increase interoperability. Perhaps it should be the other way around. Certainly, in the special operations community it has worked out that way, with the Air Force fielding ground troops today specially trained to accomplish CAS in support of UW operations.

In Iraq, military convoys of unmarked white Toyota 4-Runners carry joint teams of Army and Air Force Special Operations Forces to their targets, accompanied by a motley assortment of vehicles carrying their Pesh Merga allies. At Komal, SF parked outside the town and directed a devastating round-the-clock bombardment until the majority of the defenders were either dead or had fled.

The Ansar raid had initially been a direct action mission timed to coincide with the entry of U.S. conventional forces in country, which is why the action had been delayed for months. When Turkey denied passage to U.S. forces stationed there, however, they knocked two whole divisions out

*Iraqi Kurd leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) Massoud Barazani during a press conference 28 March 2003 in the city of Salahuddin, Iraq. In another city of the Kurdish enclave, a string of missiles or artillery shells slammed into the Kurdish-controlled town of Chamchamal in an apparent Iraqi Army retaliation for an advance towards the northern city of Kirkuk, 40 kilometers away, by pro-U.S. Kurd fighters.*

of the war, and denied America a northern front. Taking a page from the Afghanistan playbook, however, U.S. Special Operations proved more than up to the task.

This is the kind of war which many had advocated against Iraq in the first place, but the power and sheer size of the Iraqi Army dissuaded Pentagon planners from applying the Afghan model as a complete solution. With Iraq cut-up into manageable sections, however, with the British in the South and U.S. conventional forces focused in the center on Baghdad, USSOF was given a unique opportunity by accident. There was no conventional northern front due to Turkish intransigence. SF virtually created one without assets other than the determination and expertise of a few hundred highly trained men. These men crushed al-Qaeda and validated the Special Operations blueprint for opening up the northern front in Iraq. This front proceeded to conduct follow-on operations in cooperation with their Pesh Merga Kurdish allies to seize the key cities of Kirkuk and Mosul, and liberate the country, contributing another page to the storied history of Special Operations. *De Oppresso Liber.*

*Victor Black is a U.S. Army veteran and covered the Northern Iraq front as a free-lance correspondent during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He currently resides in Los Angeles, CA. ✕*



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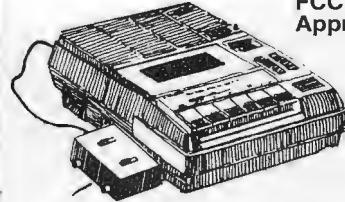
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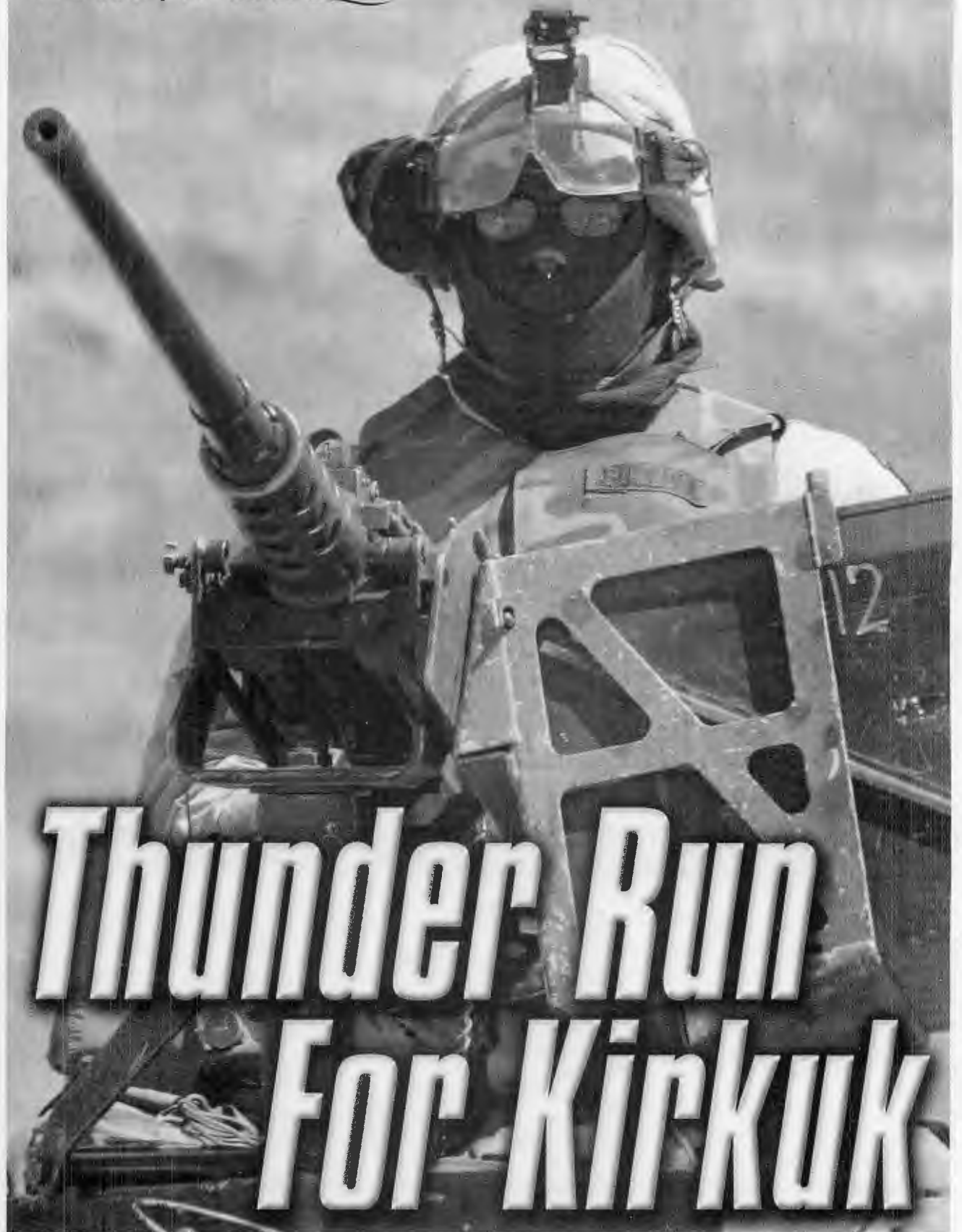
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WAR · IN · IRAQ



# Thunder Run For Kirkuk

U.S. Special Ops Forces — With Kurdish  
Rebels/USAF — Take Northern Iraqi Front



**T**he end of the war in Northern Iraq took 24 hours after the fall of Baghdad was officially announced on 9 April. In the words of one 10th Special Forces Group NCO, the storming of Kirkuk was “straight out of a scene from Road Warrior.”

Some 3,000 *Pesh Merga* (means “those who face death”) fighters driving pickups, jeeps, taxis, and any form of wheeled transport available, flew up the highway in a cloud of dust after smashing through what remained of the dispirited Iraqi opposition. They fired their Kalashnikovs in the air as they finally entered their historic capital city, victorious after decades of warfare. The Northern front ended when Mosul fell the following day without a fight as the Iraqi Republican Guard corps protecting the northernmost Iraqi government stronghold decided discretion was the better part of valor, especially with Baghdad fallen and the example of the previous day’s devastation before them.

The *Pesh Merga* that stormed Kirkuk were led by the most admired military hero of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, General “Mam” Rostem Hamid Rahim, accompanied by four teams of U.S. Army Special Forces advisors, one for each main axis of advance into the surrounded city. Rostem had been fighting against Saddam and his Ba’ath party for 35

years to retake the Kirkuk region of his birth. The cheerful warrior, known for cracking jokes during firefights, carries 25 pieces of shrapnel in his body, and is credited with a legion of successful actions, most notably taking down an Iraqi attack helicopter — with one arm and an RPG after being severely wounded in action in 1978. Now he was a general, commanding almost three thousand fighters in a final assault on his lifelong objective.

The final bombardment preceding the morning attack of 10 April 2003, had taken 10 days. Iraqi troops had given ground slowly over the course of the two weeks preceding the final two weeks under a steady barrage of American air power.

First came the B-52s, raining hot steel in the form of JDAMs on any armor that moved, then following up with 2,000-pound daisy cutters, “bunker-busters,” and 500-pound GPS-guided precision-strike munitions. Finally, came cluster bombs on the infantry positions, followed by Tomahawk missile strikes courtesy of the U.S. Navy on command and control nodes. The final strikes on the remaining Iraqi positions commanding approaches to the city the morning of the assault were carried out by a combination of aircraft, including FA-18 fighter bombers, whose hellfire missiles decimated Iraqi vehicles and positions with deadly accuracy. Blasted and burned

*(left) A U.S. soldier from the 173rd Airborne Brigade patrols 1 April 2003 near an airstrip in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-controlled town of Harir, north of Arbil. Some 2,000 men from the U.S. brigade have dropped into Kurdish-held northern Iraq as part of*

*U.S. attempts to form a northern front in their war on Iraq. (below) American SpecOps in a Toyota 4-Runner, loaded to the gills to do what they did with such expertise. Author found mostly men of the 3rd SFG at Mosul, the 10th at Kirkuk.*



Victor Black



out vehicles littered the road, while hundreds of trucks, tanks, and APCs lay abandoned in ditches or remained where their crews had abandoned them in their positions.

Special Forces had two main missions in the Northern Campaign: Close Air Support (CAS), and coordinating the actions of the Pesh Merga with Central Command. Just like Afghanistan, they were working with resistance groups which knew the terrain and had been fighting a hit-and-run war of attrition against a better-armed-foe for years, in the case of Iraq, for decades. According to one SF trooper on the scene, "these guys had been fighting since I was born and didn't need much training. I did some patrolling with them for about a week and then we were out of time. The war was on. Our main contribution was getting on that radio and calling in the Air Force."

Special Forces, typically humble about their role, did a little more than that, though. What they had done was literally compensate for more than two entire divisions of U.S. troops which were supposed to assault through Iraq from the North. After Turkey, like France a member of NATO, betrayed America and denied border access to the 60,000- plus troops already landing in the country, America was forced to initiate the Special Forces contingency plan. The Turkish action was unanticipated, and was especially treacherous after America brought in Patriot anti-missile



Victor Black



batteries to protect the country and performed diplomatic cartwheels to impress hesitant European allies to plan a defense of Turkey in case of Iraqi aggression. In operational terms the Turkish betrayal was far worse than that of France, which limited its opposition to the political sphere. The Turks not only sabotaged a meticulously planned one week lightning war into a three-week campaign

*(left) Author observed the Silent Professionals at their professional — and silent — best. Using translators to occasionally confer with Kurd leadership, or to call in air, the SF troopers just taciturnly and competently went about their business: freeing Iraq. (right) Kurdish General Rostem, PUK commander who led the Kirkuk raid, confers with his commanders. U.S. provided airstrikes and training — better than they got after we encouraged them to revolt in '91 and '96 and left them on their own.*





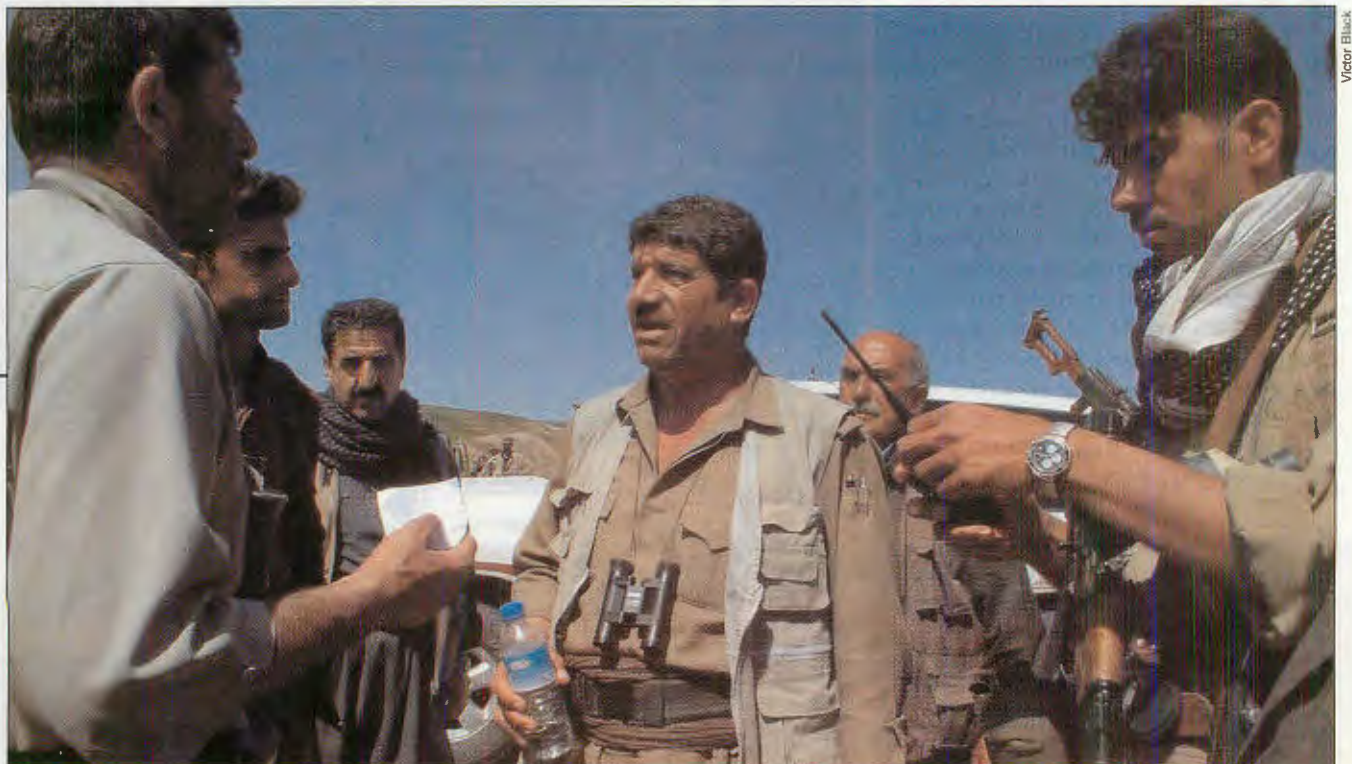
*Kurdish Pesh Merga volunteer fighters of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and U.S. soldiers run 3 April 2003, during a battle for an Iraqi post close to the village of Khazer, some 13kms from Kalak on the edge of the Kurdish enclave, and half-way along the road to the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.*

which unnecessarily cost more American lives, but actually threatened the U.S. with statements to the effect that they would not only deny U.S. troops access to Iraq, but would launch their own invasion despite U.S. opposition if the Kurds attacked the major U.S. objectives in the North, Kirkuk or Mosul. Turkey, previously the seat of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled the entire Persian Gulf until World War I, has maintained designs on the northern Iraqi oilfields near Kirkuk and even maintained an empty senate seat for Mosul until the present day.

In the end, the Turkish blinked and did not attack, but they had already done significant damage to the U.S. war plan. There was no U.S. armor in the North, only the tanks of Saddam Hussein's army facing off with a few thousand lightly armed Kurdish irregulars and their Special Forces advisors. Instead of using their military advantage to overrun the Kurdish enclaves, fortunately, the Iraqis chose to dig in around Kirkuk and Mosul. American SF took the initiative.

Kirkuk lies on the edge of PUK terri-

*Continued on page 73*





# War Correspondents'

BY VICTOR BLACK

## "Midnight Run" To Iraq

### Infiltrating Turkish Lines With Kurdish Smugglers

**T**he time had come to make a decision: Sit out the war or make a run for it. J.C., Carlos (names changed to protect the guilty) and I laced up our boots and walked out the door.

We three free-lance journalists were stuck in the filthy border town of Silopi, Turkey, with the story of the century happening on the other side of the border with Iraq. The Turks had closed the border to U.S. troops. They certainly were not going to let free-lance journalists cross, even if they said please. So, we had to explore other options.

The plan we had arranged with the Kurdish smugglers looked simple enough. With any luck we would be in Iraq within the hour. Four days later we did stagger into Iraq, but if we had know of everything that lay in between walking out that door and walking into



*An Iraqi Kurd Pesh Merga fighter gestures to photographers to stop taking pictures 30 March 2003 from behind a barrier at the airstrip in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-controlled town of Harir, north of Arbil, alongside newly-deployed U.S. forces in northern Iraq.*



our war-zone sanctuary we might have hesitated to cross the threshold. We would never have signed up for the program if we had known the experience would make SERE school look like a joke. Sometimes ignorance is a fortunate thing.

We did the deal over cigarettes and tea in a nondescript café. Drawn together by happenstance and instinct, this was indeed a motley crew. I had spotted J.C. and Carlos in Diyarbakir, Turkey, as two adventurers likely up for anything. Carlos had hair down to his shoulders and J.C. had his Gerber strapped to his chest. I figured these guys were looking for the same thing I was, and we agreed to rendezvous in Silopi.

I found an interpreter at the fleabag hotel I was flopping in and headed south to case the border. I immediately figured out staring down the business end of Turkish guns that there was only one way out. I asked my interpreter if he knew anybody who could get us across. He smiled and raised his shirt, displaying a tattoo of prison scars. I had the right man,

Within hours we were sitting across the table from two likely looking mafia types. They demanded \$8,000 up front. We haggled and settled on \$6,500 for the three of us; \$2,000 up front, and \$4,500 Western Unioned from a lawyer friend state-side. This, of course, meant we had to take our new friends to the bank and show them what Western Union was — after several hours of negotiation over the phone to America with a Kurdish friend we didn't know our lawyer had.

They understood the wondrous new technology of Western Union and agreed to the deal. Only thing was, we would be hostages until the money cleared. We figured we had it made.

Our smuggler guides told us we would throw our bags in a boat, cross the river in the night from Silopi, Turkey, past a guard post they had paid off to look the other way. A taxi would pick us up and within an hour we would be in Zaho, Iraq.

We sat in the hotel lobby and waited for the pickup. We told ourselves we had done everything right. We paid roughly \$2,000 up front and would wire the remaining \$4,500 upon our safe arrival in Iraq. We would have to remain the "guests" of our guides until the money cleared, but hey, what could go wrong with such a fool-proof plan? We would be toasting each other on the way to Erbil the next morning.

We should have known no plan survives first contact. Ours didn't even survive that long.

After four hours in the lobby, we knew something was wrong. Finally, the one smuggler who spoke English appeared at our side.

"The militairs are very busy tonight," he said. "We have to change our plan."

He convinced us nothing was seriously wrong. We would now have to walk across the border the following night, but it would only take an hour, and a taxi would pick us up on the other side. He explained the Turkish soldiers manning the highway checkpoint blocking the mountain access road to Sirinak withdrew 500 meters up that road to a military camp every night. They then moved the checkpoint back to the intersection with the main highway in the morning. We would simply drive to a house owned by a friend across from the military camp within the hour. When the soldiers left the camp in the morning and moved the checkpoint back down to the road to the highway, we would then automatically be on the other side. We would then simply drive to the border, run across during the night, and a car would be waiting on the other side.

This is exactly the way it worked for the checkpoint anyway, and we quietly drove out of the smuggler's driveway in the morning after sleeping under the walls of the Turkish military camp the



AFP PHOTO/JOSEPH BARRAK









**Author (above, Gargoyles, folding AK) and associate pose with fallen statue of a fallen leader of a fallen regime. Reporting on history as it happens is fun, but sometimes just getting there can be half the fun.**

**(opposite top): Force of U.S. SpecOps and Pesh Merga que-up for road march. For SF it was *veni, vidi, vici*; for the Kurds, it had been a long wait.**

**(opposite bottom): SpecOps leader with "full-dress" M4 carbine slung behind, does really important Army stuff on the radio.**

night before. We thought we had it made. We would spend the day driving through Turkey to our drop-off point, and at nightfall we would walk 5 km. into Iraq.

We drove through the mountain town of Sirinak without challenge at 0900, and congratulated ourselves on passing the last chance for compromise. Then everything went to hell.

A man flagged us down on the mountain road, apparently their contact. We spoke excitedly in Kurdish. Apparently a new checkpoint had been set up around the bend. We would have to get out, walk around the mountainside, and get in the car on the other side of the checkpoint. We should have known when they threw our rucksacks at us this would be the last time we would see the car.

We followed the silent Kurd from the roadside, a young smuggler in jeans and tennis shoes looking like he came straight from town. We half-climbed, half-fell through the snow, grass, and small waterfalls on the mountainside down to the river below. Then, gasping for breath, we climbed again for hours back up the other side of the mountain. Our guide spoke, of course, no English, but only pointed and climbed. We had no choice but to follow.

By noon we reached a cave in the side of a cliff where a middle aged mountain man was waiting in traditional Kurdish garb, an AK-47 slung over his shoulder. Of course, he spoke no English either. Our first guide left. Exhausted from the unexpected climb and overloaded with gear we would never have brought on a backpacking trip, we repeatedly asked where we would find the car again.

He only smiled and repeated "taxi no" over and over.

We called our smuggler contacts from Silopi on our cell phone, who cheerfully informed us it was now impossible to reach a road, let alone find a car, but after a short walk, we would reach a house where we would rest until nightfall, and then make a quick dash across the border. We started walking again. The scenery was breathtaking, but one false step could send you a thousand feet to the rocks below. That was when Carlos' legs gave out.

The Kurdish smugglers had told us to dump our water to save weight when we left the car. Unfortunately, Carlos had listened to them. Four hours later, the heat cramps had started. I shared my water with him, but it was too late. Carlos needed hours of rest and shade. This we did not have. We now divided Carlos's gear between us as we switched off trying to steady him from in front or behind. It was usually

impossible to walk side by side on the mountain paths or up the rock faces as we made our way. Carlos collapsed every 10 feet for six hours, but never gave up, silently dragging himself to his feet without a word and soldiering on.

A small boy no more than 10-years-old, apparently our guide's son, appeared out of nowhere on the trail. He blithely shouldered two of our extra bags, no doubt doubling his body weight, and ran up the trail ahead. It was clear these people were born to this land — and we were not. We would find out in coming days that this unique breed of men could live without water, surviving on the occasional bread crust and scrap of goat cheese, a cup of tea, cigarettes, and mountain air. Sweating and silently cursing, we struggled on behind.

By evening we had reached a small town, apparently a safe haven of sorts. Our guide pointed to Carlos and said "Silopi." He wanted Carlos to give up and go back to Silopi and face arrest rather than continue on. We refused. He indicated with up-and-down movements of his hands that we would have to climb many mountains. He kept repeating, "Asker" the Turkish word for soldier, and pantomimed hiding from patrols and then running. This was not the infiltration we had planned for.

Carlos eventually volunteered to go back, but finally, the guide changed his mind. We rested. Now, instead of turning into the town, our guide led us through the night. Carlos was slightly better now. As silently as we could we crept past the outskirts of the town, fording streams and clambering over barbed wire, trying to keep low to avoid the probing eyes of sentries from guard towers on the road near town. We followed our guide to a small cinder-block house where we sat on the floor and gratefully drank steaming tea pressed into our hands.

To our glee, our phone signal strength suddenly improved and we called our Silopi contact once again. We asked what the plan was now. Our contact told us that we would rest here until 0200 hours and then, if Carlos was ready, we would all go to Iraq. A horse would follow with our gear in the morning. This sounded like a much better plan.

*Continued on page 77*







## March To Baghdad

Continued from page 42

had destroyed 12 tanks, three anti-aircraft guns and one towed howitzer. The engagement had lasted about 10 minutes. While Iraqi tanks had reportedly been in bad shape before the war began, this engagement just illustrates the value of maintaining a good bore-site and performing those Armor Accuracy Checks.

### Just The Latest

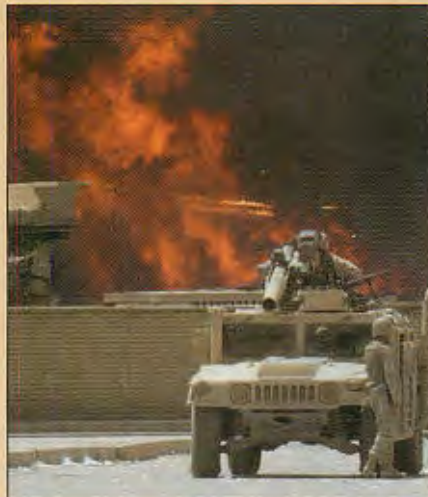
Earlier in the day, "Apache" Troop had destroyed nine tanks and killed about 350 Iraqi infantrymen (with Bradley main-gunfire accounting for five of the nine tank kills). The other vehicles destroyed included an armored personnel carrier and 43 civilian-style trucks and cars being used to transport fighters to the battle. The Iraqis had simply been driving down the freeway when Apache troop attacked. The Squadron Commander felt that "A" (or "Apache") troop had probably run into elements of Iraq's Hammurabi Division as they shifted south into positions west of the airport.

The Troop also had fought a running battle with light-infantry militia and suicide bombers through the night and into the morning of the 4th. On the 5th, while trying to locate the source of a mortar that had shelled the squadron's Tactical Operations Center about 9 miles southwest of Baghdad, troopers happened upon an estate owned by Saddam's eldest son, Uday. The abandoned estate included two villas (both hit by Air Force bombs), a swimming pool and a yacht on a trailer. In one building, they found hundreds of

## A Present From Allah

One of the "embedded" journalist teams traveling with the 7th Cavalry was from CNN. The news conglomerate had hired nine staff from British-based security company AKE for its Iraq team. Paul Johnson, an eight-year veteran of Australia's elite Special Air Service Regiment and currently operations manager for AKE Australia, was the driver for CNN reporter Walt Rodgers and his cameraman.

During the Cav's tenacious drive on Baghdad, Johnson saved an Iraqi Republican Guard lieutenant who had been left for dead on the side of the road. When an Iraqi unit tried to drive through the Cav's line on the night of 3 April, this soldier became a casualty and lay out on the roadside for five hours. The Iraqis were pinning-down everyone in the rear with sporadic artillery fire, so a medical armored personnel carrier couldn't immediately come forward. The little band of journalists and their minders secured the Iraqi and after giving him first-aid, the prisoner not only survived but "sang like a bird," providing U.S. intelligence with some valuable information. — A. G.



AFP PHOTO/AMZI HAIDAR

(above) U.S. Marines blow-up the Ministry of Defense building in Baghdad 10 April 2003. (below) American Marines in an M240 GPMG-equipped High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV) from Task Force Tarawa moving to support fellow Marines during a fire-fight in Nasiriyah, on 1 April 2003.

pounds of frozen chicken and promptly proceeded to cook as much of it as possible over an open fire.

By the morning of the 6th, the Cavalry was just southwest of Baghdad International Airport and some Iraqi civilians were beginning to step forward and collaborate. They were telling interpreters and intelligence officers where the Fedayeen were hiding in schools during the day, coming out only at night to launch hit-and-run attacks on the 7th Cavalry.

### Lessons "Earned"

As the dust started to settle around Baghdad International, a widely circulated E-Mail message from V Corps Master Gunner First Sergeant Jack R. Cooper chronicled a series of "lessons learned" after traveling with 3/7 Cavalry. Cooper reported that tank and Bradley crews have started using captured enemy AK-47 rifles for personal protection, since the Fedayeen took advantage of the reduced visibility during sandstorms to move in close. The crews are armed with 9mm Berettas, but the AK-47s do a much better job.

The 25mm chain gun and the 7.62-caliber light machine gun on the Bradley Fighting Vehicle were particularly useful, although the gas plug on the 7.62 has been the biggest maintenance issue. The units didn't bring along enough spare plugs, but leaving what spares they had soak in an ammo can with some JP-8 fuel would self-clean the plugs while the mission continued.

Adam Geibel has been a New Jersey Army National Guard soldier for 15 years, with a background in Armor, Cavalry and Military Intelligence. ✕

Gordon A. Rouse/REX FEATURES UPI



# The VZ2000

## Like The Phoenix, An Ultra-Rare Rifle Rises From Ashes Of The Cold War

TEXT & PHOTOS BY GARY PAUL JOHNSTON

**W**hen Soviet communism swallowed much of Europe after World War II, the countries it enslaved became satellites of the evil empire. Among the first orders of business was strict standardization of military equipment, including small arms, but one country didn't buy all the Soviets had to offer.

One of the most progressive countries taken captive by the Soviets was Czechoslovakia. However, because Czechoslovakia was economically stronger than other countries taken over by the Soviet Bloc, and had a history as a world leader in small-arms development, it was permitted a degree of initiative in developing and making weapons of native design.

At the time of the takeover, the Czechoslovak arms industry was having renewed success on the world market. The Czechoslovak Army and Government were understandably proud of the accomplishments of this native industry, and so Moscow decided that standardization would be imposed only so far as was necessary to meet military requirements. After all, such a decision was in harmony with the Soviet propaganda line that claimed that the establishment of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic expressed the free choice of the people of Czechoslovakia.

Among the first rifles of native Czech design was the Vz. 52 semi-automatic rifle (Vz. is the abbreviation of the Czech word *Vzor*, meaning model). Resembling the Soviet SKS on its exterior, the Vz. 52 operated differently from and shared no parts in common with the Soviet rifle, being instead a combination of the German G41w gas system and a Garand-style firing mechanism, with a detachable-box magazine. First chambered for the unique Czech intermediate-sized cartridge, the 7.62x45mm, the Vz. 52 was later converted to use the Soviet 7.62x39mm round.

In 1958, the Czechoslovak Army adopted a brand new assault rifle, the Vz. 58. Of native design, the Vz. 58 was a product of the great arms producer, Ceska Zbrojovka, to which the words *Narodni Podnik* (Peoples' Factory or Cooperative Enterprise) were added after the Soviet takeover.

Like the Vz. 52, the Vz. 58 resembles its Soviet Bloc counterpart, in this case, the AK-47, but as with the Vz. 52, the resemblance is barely skin deep. In fact, the only commonality between the Vz. 58 and the AK-47 is the 7.62x39mm cartridge both rifles fire.

### Unique Operation

Sharing no parts whatsoever with the AK-47, the Vz. 58 uses a separate short-stroke gas piston rather than the long-stroke piston attached to the bolt-carrier of the AK. Whereas the AK has a rotating bolt, that of the Vz. 58 locks via a pivoting locking block like that used in

the Walther P38 and Beretta 92 pistols, except in the Vz. 58 this block is inverted. When the gas piston forces the carrier to move rearward, the carrier cams the front of the locking block up, causing its dual locking lugs to disengage from their recesses in the sides of the receiver.

Rather than using the conventional pivoting hammer of the AK-47, the Vz. 58 has a linear hammer that rides in the bolt carrier and bolt. When released by the sear, this hammer slides forward to contact the striker to fire the rifle. With two sears, the rifle fires either semi- or full-automatically depending on the position



*The camera catches an empty 7.62x39mm case being ejected from the VZ2000 a millisecond after Gil Angelotti fires the rifle off-hand. Recoil was light, and the rifle never malfunctioned.*

of the selector.

Although the Vz. 58 has what appears to be an ambidextrous magazine release, it most easily operated from the left side with the help of a recess in the stamped trigger guard. To the right of this release is a bolt hold-open device similar to that on the FN-FAL, which automatically activates after the last shot is fired from a magazine, or can be engaged by hand. The unique 30-shot magazine used by the Vz. 58 is made of lightweight alloy.

After first being issued with hardwood furniture, the Vz. 58's stock, grip, forend and handguard were later changed to cyrolac, a strong synthetic rendered in a mottled black and reddish brown. The rifle's receiver is machined from a single steel forging.

As with the AK-47, the Vz. 58's recoil spring system is housed in a stamped steel receiver cover at the rear of the receiver, but this spring and that for the striker are captive in



Formerly as scarce as hens' teeth in the U.S., the petite Czech Vz. 58 is now available in semi-automatic only as the VZ2000 from Ohio Ordnance Works. It is shown here with its leather quad magazine pouch and extra 30-shot magazines. (inset) The VZ2000's unique locking lugs can be seen where the cartridge case meets the bullet.







*The sample VZ2000, serial #00W030, proved to be a 100% "dead ringer" for an original Vz.58. Only its machined semi-automatic ONLY receiver and several internal parts are not original. Note the special indented trigger guard that allows access to the magazine release. (left) Among the unique features of the Vz.58 and the new VZ2000 is that the rifle uses standard SKS 10-shot chargers. With the bolt locked to the rear and an empty magazine in place, the rifle can be reloaded using three chargers.*



*This close-up of the bolt group illustrates the unique falling-block locking mechanism of the Vz.58 and VZ2000. Except for being inverted, it is exactly like that used in the German P.38 and Beretta 92 pistols.*

the cover. Made of a solid forging, the bolt carrier contains the cocking handle that is angled upward on the right side.

Unlike the AK-47, the Vz. 58's bolt carrier is cut to accept chargers, and uses the 10-shot charger designed for the SKS. With its bolt locked to the rear with a magazine in place, the Vz. 58 can be fully or partially loaded using these chargers, whenever necessary.

### Fieldstripping

Without a hammer and associated parts, the Vz. 58 is a very simple rifle, as is its takedown procedure. After removing the magazine and making sure the chamber is empty, close the bolt and dry fire the rifle. Then push out the retaining pin at the rear of the receiver from left to right until it stops on its détente.

Now lift up the receiver cover and remove it and its captive recoil and striker springs. Then pull back the bolt-carrier until it and the bolt can be lifted out of the receiver. Pull back the linear hammer and rotate it counter-clockwise to remove it from the rear of the carrier. The bolt and locking block will then drop out the bottom of the carrier.

Push out the retaining pin in the rear-sight base from left to right. Now, pull back and lift off the handguard. Then pull back the piston until it clears the gas cylinder. Then lift



it up and remove it and its spring forward from the rear sight base. No further disassembly is necessary. Reassembly is in reverse order remembering to pull the trigger to allow the hammer to go forward before replacing the receiver cover and its springs.

Petite and lightweight, the Vz. 58 is noticeably handier than the AK-47 and is quite reliable and accurate. It is also made like a fine watch, as one would expect of the Czechs, but it has almost never been seen in the Free World, that is, until now.

### The VZ2000

Thanks to Ohio Ordnance Works (OOW), the Vz. 58 will soon be available to American collectors in a new semi-automatic-only version. Built on a copy of the Vz. 58's receiver, the new rifle is exact in almost every detail, but one: It will not accept any selective-fire parts.

Engineered from drawings of an original Vz. 58 receiver, OOW's receiver is 100% CNC machined from a solid billet of 4150 steel before being heat-treated and matte blued. It is then assembled on original like-new parts along with some new internal parts also made by OOW to comply with the law. To achieve a legal 16" barrel, a muzzle extension is permanently tig welded to both the barrel and front sight base. To retain its authenticity while commemorating the new millenium, the rifle is called the VZ2000, the year the project began, and OOW also changed the designation from Vz. to VZ. In addition, OOW added the letters "S" and "F" to the new receiver for SAFE

## VZ2000

### SPECIFICATIONS

**Caliber:** 7.62x39mm

**Velocity:** 2,300 fps.

**Operation:** Short-stroke gas piston

**Method Of Locking:** Falling-block (Walther pattern)

**Type Of Fire:** Semi-automatic only

**Barrel Length:** 16-1/8 in.

**Overall Length:** 33-3/4 in.

**Weight:** 6.8 pounds

**Feed Device:** 30-shot box magazine

**Safety Device:** Thumb safety/selector

**Sights:** (front) Protected post drift adj. for W/E  
(rear) Tangent, adjustable for elevation

**Stocks:** Cyrolac synthetic

**Finish:** Blue

**Features:** New semi-automatic receiver built with new original Vz. 58 parts

**Price:** \$1,200.00

## Accuracy Chart

7.62x39mm Cartridge:	Velocity	Small Group	Large Group	Average
E. German 123 gr. ball	2,289 fps	4.18"	5.03"	4.68"
Federal 123 gr. JSP	2,294 fps	2.12"	2.49"	2.33"
PMC 123 gr. FMJ	2,344 fps	1.24"	2.56"	2.29"
Winchester 123 gr. JSP	2,357 fps	2.02"	3.11"	2.41"
Wolf 123 gr. FMJ	2,302 fps	2.16"	2.58"	2.39"

(Five 3-Shot, 100-Yard Bench-Rest Groups Using ProChrono LE. Elev: 6,500'; Temp: 36\*; Humid: 28%.)

**Accuracy from the sample VZ2000 was more than acceptable, as this 100-yard, 3-shot group illustrates.**



and FIRE.

After examining prototype VZ2000 serial number OOW001 (Ohio Ordnance Works #1) a few years ago, I have been able to test an example of the final version of the rifle, this one bearing serial number OOW030.

Exquisite in its execution, the VZ2000's receiver is as perfect in detail as I've seen. All original parts fit to perfection, and the finish matches perfectly. The original bolt, extractor and locking block are left with their as-issued hard-chrome finish, as is the gas piston and its cylinder.

With handling characteristics resembling those of the U.S. M4 Carbine, the ultra-light VZ2000, like its Vz. 58 ancestor, is like shooting nothing else in its class. Even with its fully machined receiver, the rifle congers up the impression of an added adjective such as "mini," or "baby," in front of its designation.

### Shots Fired

Having spoken with Mr. Thomas B. Nelson, author of *The World's Assault Rifles*, about the Vz. 58, I learned that the rifle was not designed for sustained automatic-fire, and does not perform well in this role, because of overheating. Mr. Nelson reported having fired some 18,000 rounds through several Vz. 58 rifles some 25 years ago, all on full-automatic, where the rifle quickly became very hot.

The Vz. 58's light weight also causes it to rise more quickly. However, Mr. Nelson did report that even though those firing the weapon had to wear asbestos gloves to hold the forend, the Vz. 58's being tested did



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not malfunction.

Firing the first 30 rounds from our test VZ2000 rifle without stopping caused the rifle and its forend and handguard to become quite warm just as Tom Nelson had reported.

Firing the semi-automatic VZ2000 off-hand out to 100 yards, I was able to make consistent rapid hits on 2'X2' steel targets with no trouble. This proved that not only were the VZ2000's sights on, but also that this 40-year-old rifle's handling characteristics were excellent.

One thing common with many foreign rifles was also found with this one. The selector is not in step with Western thinking. That is, rotating the tail of the selector to the rear allows the rifle to be fired and rotating it forward makes the rifle "safe." The selectors of most American semi-automatic rifles work in an opposite manner.

The SKS chargers (or stripper clips) work perfectly in the VZ2000. However, each empty charger must be pulled out of the bolt carrier and discarded. Three 10-shot chargers fully load 30-shot Vz. 58 magazine in the rifle.

In the accuracy department, the VZ 2000 performed exceptionally well, and no doubt as well as when it was assembled as a Vz.58. After all, the only difference is its newly machined semi-automatic only receiver. At 100 yards from the bench with a variety of 7.62x39mm ammunition, the VZ2000 consistently averaged 5-shot groups of from 2.5" to 5" with the worst accuracy coming from some East German 7.62x39mm ammunition that I have never found to be accurate in any rifle. No malfunctions of any kind were experienced.

Few have ever seen a real Vz. 58 rifle, much less handled one. The fact that this ultra-rare rifle is available in the U.S. under any circumstances would be exciting, but being available with a completely machined receiver of such high quality is a bonus to say the least. The VZ2000 is equal in quality to Ohio Ordnance Works' fabulous Browning Automatic Rifle family.

Whether you're a collector, or military history enthusiast, the VZ2000 is a gun you'll want to own. For information on the VZ2000 and all its firearms, contact Ohio Ordnance Works, Inc., Dept. SOF, P.O.Box 687, Chardon, OH 44024; phone: 440-285-3481. Most importantly, remember: If your Founding Fathers did not intend for you to own firearms, IT WAS THE BEST KEPT SECRET OF THE 19TH CENTURY. To keep your VZ2000 and the rest of your guns, JOIN THE NRA, and VOTE! ✕

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## Thunder Run For Kirkuk

Continued from page 61

tory, and the forces of the PUK leader, Jalal Talabani, took the lead on the Kirkuk front. Mosul borders Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) territory, and the fighters of KDP warlord Massoud Barzani concentrated on that city. Each had their complement of U.S. SF. This means SF had to play the additional role as peacemakers and coordinators between the KDP and PUK, whose coalition government was less than five years old. The groups had fought civil wars in 1996, when the KDP leader, Massoud Barzani, had enlisted the aid of Saddam Hussein's armored battalions to rid Erbil of his PUK rivals, and in 1998, when Barzani had cooperated with the Turkish Army in an incursion across the border to attack the PUK. According to unconfirmed reports in Ankara, Barzani may have promised the Turks he would cooperate with them if they invaded Iraq to attack PUK forces if they

seized Kirkuk. This was a tense marriage, and while the Pesh Merga on both sides cooperated without exception, there was little coordination except that provided by SF. SF was the glue that held the coalition together, and as the representatives of America, they did a stellar job in leading a diverse and irregular force against a well-armed and trained foe.

The U.S. Special Forces were stretched thin, with 3-6 members per each Hess of Pesh Merga. The Pesh do

not follow a typical U.S. military organizational chart. There are no service-support units; only combat support in the form of the occasional battery of artillery older than any of its operators. A Hess consists of approximately 400 fighters, and is broken down into battalions of 200, Sarlak of 30, and Sardal of 15.

U.S. SF NCOs operated at the Hess-level and moved with the commanders to call in CAS and provide covering fire or lead patrols and assaults as necessary.

Kirkuk is the oil-rich historical capital of the Kurds. It was the center of the Northern oilfields, and by some accounts, Ba Ba Gur, the field outside the city, ranked the second largest oil field in the country, may be the most impressive field remaining in the country after years of mismanagement of the southern fields by Saddam Hussein.

Mosul has no oil fields to date, but it is the third largest city in Iraq after Basra, is predominantly Arab, and was the northernmost outpost of the Hussein regime.



Victor Brucet

*JSOC? OGA? Or "plain" SF? The ubiquitous Toyotas and closed-mouth professionals were much in evidence once the shooting started.*

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Many of Saddam's senior officers had family in Mosul, and the Arab enclave was the last major city to fall to the U.S.-led coalition. The leader of Mosul was known as Abdullah *Wahash*, translated as "Abdullah the Monster." A close relative of Hussein's defense minister, he made a fortune in smuggling and was responsible for the abduction and murder of hundreds of political opponents of the regime.

SF called in airstrikes and pushed the Iraqis back hill by hill, taking, losing, and retaking town after town en route to their final objective. Major actions took place around the town of Kalak on the Mosul line, as well as Chamchamal and Taqtaq on the road to Kirkuk. The Kalak line moved back and forth three times as the Iraqis counterattacked with tanks to maintain their position. According to one SF NCO, "you know you are in the shit when you see the tanks coming at your foxhole." Somehow, with the help of a few AT-4s and a lot of courage, SF held their ground.

Starting on Thursday, 27 March, the Iraqis made a series of tactical withdrawals toward Kirkuk. On Monday, 1 April, the U.S.-backed Kurdish militia advanced to Taqtaq, 24 kilometers from Kirkuk and within sight of the lights of the city. Under intense bombardment, the Iraqis made their final withdrawal to the outskirts of Kirkuk. They had left in the night after intense bombardment, leaving unmarked minefields in their wake to slow the Kurdish advance. They dug-in and waited for what would be the final assault.

Sunday, 31 March, under intense bombardment of their mountain positions south of Kalak on the road to Erbil, the Iraqis had also given ground, and the coalition drew to within 50 kilometers of Mosul.

The northern coalition attacked toward Mosul and Kirkuk simultaneously. On the Mosul road from Kalak, the Iraqis blew the bridges and withdrew into the city, which delayed the advance for hours until a makeshift repair team was able to partially repair one of the spans and enable a slow trickle of vehicles to advance toward the city. By nightfall, Kurdish Pesh Merga were sending recon teams into the city, but CENTCOM ordered the KDP to withdraw, and Barzani, who reportedly maintained contact with the Turks who had threatened invasion, relayed the command. Mosul surrendered the following day.

Kirkuk had to be taken by force. On

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the 8th of 10 days of bombardment, General Rostem, of the PUK, personally led a team of SF to recon Iraqi positions in Kirkuk from the hills of Bani Makan overlooking the city. This would be the main axis of advance. There were three more axes: Kirkuk was the boyhood home of the General who had first enlisted as a Pesh Merga in 1967. Born in 1952, he had spent his entire life fighting to retake Kirkuk and conducting hit-and-run attacks in the area against the Iraqi Ba'ath Party which Saddam had taken over in 1979. He had stormed Kirkuk in 1991 after the first Gulf War when then-President Bush Sr. had urged the Iraqi people to rise up and attack Saddam. He had been forced to withdraw with heavy losses, however, after the U.S. did not support him, when the Iraqi counterattack, supported by tanks and attack helicopters, came from Baghdad. This was truly a second Bay of Pigs to many international observers, who concluded the Kurds attacked thinking the U.S. would support them. At that time, the U.S. had been self-constrained by accepting a United Nations mandate which called for an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait, but did not authorize regime change in Baghdad. The U.S. would not breach a U.N. mandate it had already accepted, and the Kurds were defeated in the North, just as spontaneous uprisings across Iraq were crushed. This time would be different. The U.S. had grown weary of endless diplomatic wrangling at a gridlocked U.N. and decided to end the reign of Saddam Hussein with a coalition of the willing before Saddam could employ weapons of mass destruction on the world, as he had when he gassed the Kurdish town of Halabja in his own country in 1988. In the words of General Rostem: "Before, the only friends the Kurdish people had were the mountains. Now the U.S. is our friend and nothing can stand in our way."

After a final reconnaissance, the Kurdish leader and his U.S. advisors moved the Pesh Merga forward to a final rally point near the town of Chimin to make final preparations for the attack. At 0400, on Day 10, the Pesh Merga crept forward into their assault positions at Chimin. The final air bombardment began at 0530, and the Pesh began moving forward until they were in sight of the Iraqi defenders. The Iraqis poking their heads up after each USAF barrage to launch highly effective artillery and mortar fire at the Pesh Mergas, who crouched miraculously unhurt among the boulders.

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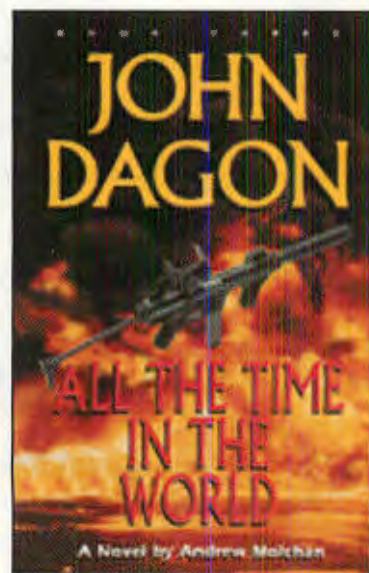
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The bomb-versus-artillery duel lasted until noon, at which point the Pesh Mergas charged forward screaming "Kirkuk! Kirkuk!"

The hour-long firefight was intense but ultimately successful, with no casualties among approximately 700 Kurdish fighters, or approximately two Hess. Seizing the final ring of hills overlooking Kirkuk, the Pesh Merga didn't stop, but raced to their vehicles and made a beeline for the city.

The U.S./Pesh Merga coalition attacked simultaneously along four main axes. Similar actions took place along the three other axes of advance into Kirkuk under Rostem's command, also supported by U.S. SF, who coordinated CAS support for the whole operation. These axes consisted of approximately two Hess each, totaling approximately 700-800 per line of advance. One attack came from Qushtapa in the North, made up of KDP fighters from Erbil attacking from Altun Kupri attacking along two roads, one through Dibis and one straight to Kirkuk. Three PUK axes attacked from the East and South. One came from the Northeast at Taqtaq, one from due East at Chimin under Rostem, and one from the Southeast from Qadir Karan through a town named Lailan.

Upon seizing the hills overlooking the Kirkuk, General Rostem loaded his fighters into their vehicles and charged across the plain in a "thunder run" for Kirkuk. Similar actions took place along the other axes of advance. Resistance in the city was light, with pockets of resistance being quickly overcome at the airport and other areas. At sight of the Pesh Merga, most of the Iraqi units doffed their uniforms and attempted to melt into the civilian population or fled into the hills.

U.S. SF had once more accomplished their mission, thanks to a little help from the Pesh Merga and U.S. Air Force. They had overcome incredible odds in overcoming the lack of conventional support in the North, and had once more earned the moniker: "Anything, Anywhere, Anyhow."

For General Rostem, this meant the culmination of a lifetime of struggle, and a new beginning for his people. No longer were the mountains his only friends. *De Oppresso Liber*.

Victor Black is a U.S. Army veteran and covered the Northern Iraq front as a free-lance correspondent during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He currently resides in Los Angeles. ✕



## "Midnight Run" To Iraq

Continued from page 65

Carlos force-hydrated himself water and we fell exhausted onto the intricately patterned and padded Kurdish blankets on the floor.

Within two hours we were up again and ready to go. With the older guide in the lead, the four of us hiked through the fields above the town, keeping a wary eye on the lights of the Turkish Army outposts that dotted the distant mountain peaks around us. With any luck, we would be in Iraq by dawn.

We were wary of two things, Turkish patrols and mines. We were near the border now, and the Turks had planted mines on the trails to stop smugglers just like us. Similarly, it seemed impossible to be silent in the night, and we froze each time a boot dislodged a rock or an unexpected drop-off sent one of us plunging several feet. By a miracle, we reached a small footbridge over the mountain river we "knew" was the border. Looming 100 meters from the bridge was a guard tower, sitting in the darkness on a rock outcropping overlooking the bridge as the night sky turned gray, with the oncoming dawn. Total silence reigned.

Our guide crept forward to recon the tower. After minutes that seemed hours, the old man motioned us forward. Apparently the guards were occupied. If we were seen, the guards would undoubtedly open fire and give chase if we survived the first volley. We would learn later that a journalist was shot and killed trying to cross the river back near Silopi that same night. We stepped out on the trail and ran forward in a silent rush across the bridge, and didn't stop running until we reached the bend in the trail blocking the tower's view. We were sure a car would be waiting for us and our ordeal was at an end.

Five hours of forced marching later, we concluded there would be no car. We stopped to rest and checked the GPS. We were still in Turkey. While we had crossed the correct river, we had crossed far east of Silopi in the mountains, and the river was not the border at that point. An entire mountain range lay between us and safety in Iraq. Another AK-toting Kurd showed up from the other direction, apparently our guide's 20-something son. At least he brought breakfast: Kurdish bread, tea, and goat cheese. He then trudged on toward Turkey, apparently on another mission for his clan.

After a brief rest we hiked silently on toward Iraq. Climbing the cliffs and fording rushing mountain streams, we climbed and walked through the day, ducking for cover whenever we heard the approach of the Turkish helicopters which routinely flew the mountain passes looking for smugglers — like us. Now we knew why our guides were armed. If we were caught and not shot on sight, we would be arrested and deported. If they were caught, it could mean a decade in prison, and we knew these men would never accept that. Unfortunately, since we were with them, that was now our fate, too. Bruised, battered, and blistered, we had to keep going, we had nowhere else to turn. We grimly joked with each other, asking our guides "where's the boat." They smiled without understanding and led us further into the mountains.

We made camp at dusk under a giant rock and collapsed next to the fire. The young man from the morning showed up with our original jean clad guide carrying our heavy packs. Of course, there was no horse. We were starting to build rapport with our guides, and were able to discern a new word from our guide — PKK. Great. Our smuggler friends were part of a gang of communist terrorists wanted on both sides of the border. Thank God they needed our money.

We just hoped the money they planned on getting was their share of the wire we were sending to Turkey, and not the cash we had hidden in our money belts. We eyed their AK-47s and wondered, ate more bread, cheese, and drank their ubiquitous tea. We then crawled into our sleeping bags and slept in a cave next to a roaring fire.

At 0300 we got up, rucked-up, and headed into the night. This would be the most grueling part of the journey. This was now day three of what was supposed to be a one-hour midnight run. We could not talk to our guides. We knew from map, compass, and GPS that we were near the border, but we also knew we were at best half-way through our journey. Our cell phone no longer worked and we could no longer contact the smugglers in Silopi for information about a game plan we doubted they knew much about in the first place. It was apparent the Silopi contacts were front men who simply cut deals, handed us off to our guides, and didn't ask questions. Unfortunately, we did need to ask questions, but there were no answers from present company. We did send our grid to my brother stateside via our Iridium satel-

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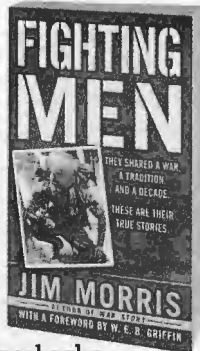
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lite phone, who plotted our course and sent a data message back which we could double check to insure we were on track. We had covered 50 kilometers in two days. Not exactly lightning speed, but the terrain would have challenged an Olympian.

By nightfall we reached the snow-line, and at sunset, with the last Turkish mountain peak outposts clearly visible two miles on either side, we staggered as fast as we could straight up through the snow and over the border. We then had to climb down the mountain. Sure, we were approaching the end of our journey, our newest concern was breaking a leg in the dark. We did have to break light discipline to climb down some cliff faces, but we figured we had to choose between risking a brief shine of the flashlight and staying on the mountain for good or being maimed for life.

We said good-bye to our Turkish guides in a smuggler's cave near the valley floor at 2200 hours on Sunday, when we were handed off to two new Iraqi Kurdish guides, who claimed to be Pesh Merga from the KDP. Whether our previous guides were PKK or not, we were happy to be with the group that legitimately controlled this part of Northern Iraq and was cooperating with the U.S. These cheerful and heavily armed men would be the people whose hospitality we would enjoy until our money cleared. Something told us a technical glitch would not be welcome, but we hoped for the best and drank more tea in the cave by the fire with our new hosts.

Our new guides told us what we wanted to hear. We would walk 1 kilometer to the valley to a road, get in a car, and drive to Zaho. It was now almost 2300 hours on Sunday. We stood up, exhausted and happy, and walked into the valley. Our new guides refused to let me walk across a fast-moving, thigh-high stream at the valley floor, insisting I ride on one guide's shoulder's. He collapsed half-way across, drenching us both in the icy water. Laughing through chattering teeth we walked up what we knew was the last slope to the trail where we knew our car would be waiting. Of course, again, the Kurdish idea of distance varied dramatically from the standard measure. We were not 1 kilometer from our objective. We were 30. Two more snow-capped peaks lay in our path.

Somehow we staggered over two more mountains and down into the val-

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ley leading to Zaho, in Iraqi Kurdistan. We stopped to rest and drink more tea with our guides. Somehow, we were not surprised at this point to learn that while we no longer had to cross the snowline, we could not walk on the road. Our guides helpfully explained in broken English and sign language that Turkish artillery and snipers routinely fired on the road to Zaho from across the border to keep smugglers from using the road. Realizing that applied to even novice smugglers like us, we picked our way across the mountainsides until noon, running across exposed hillsides when rocks would give us no cover. We finally reached a mountain bend out of range of the Turkish guns our guides healthily respected, and wonder of wonders, found the oft joked about car. We had marched from Friday morning to Monday afternoon. There was no boat, but finally, there was a car. I remembered why I had left the Army in the first place.

Amazed at our luck and congratulating ourselves for our perseverance, we sat on the carpet in our guide Hussein's house in Zaho, watching the war on Fox TV, safe in Iraq. Our phones worked again. We called in the money transfer and ate lunch. We got up to leave.

That was when Hussein blocked the door. He wanted more money. The 10 friends with AK-47s in the room with him agreed. We shouted and argued back and forth. I called our Turkish smuggler connection, who it must be admitted, stood by his part of the deal at this point, even if he had lied about the entire journey. He told our guide to let us go. Hussein would not listen, however. He repeatedly demanded more cash.

J.C., Carlos, and I looked at each other. With the exhausted courage of those with no options and nothing left to lose, we stood up, picked up our bags, brushed past our confused host, and walked out the door. We were sure the shots would ring out any second, but they never came. He didn't try to stop us. We had successfully called the smuggler's bluff.

We caught a taxi for Dahuk. By the next night we were in Erbil, near the front line of the Iraqi forces. After the Turks and our smuggler friends, we figured Saddam would be a piece of cake. *De Oppresso Liber.*

Victor Black is a U.S. Army veteran and covered the Northern Iraq front as a free-lance correspondent during Operation Iraqi Freedom. He currently resides in Los Angeles, CA. ✉

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## Bulletin Board

Continued from page 28

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— Richard Rongstad

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## Mexican Consulates Issuing "Identity Cards" To Illegals In North America

The Washington Times reports that Mexican consulates have begun to issue "Matricular [sic] Consulate" identity cards printed in English to almost anyone who applies. They report that bearers have started to do everything from open bank accounts to gain entry into Federal buildings in San Francisco and apply for social services. In the hopes that states and businesses will accept the cards as legal identification, Mexican officials have launched a massive lobbying effort of state and local governments aimed at circumventing Federal laws that require resident aliens to have official identification issued by the INS. With no U.S. oversight whatsoever, the issuance process is left solely to the Mexican government; already well know for its corruptibility. More than a million Mexican nationals have obtained the cards and already the U.S. Border Patrol has begun arresting illegal line crossers bearing multiple cards showing the same individual in the photo but carrying different personal data on each one.

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Continued from page 6

ly after I entered Kuwait with the lead elements of the Kuwaiti/Saudi armored brigade during Operation Desert Storm some 12 years ago, famed combat reporter Joe Galloway described how the 24th Mech. blasted to hell Iraqi armored brigade after armored brigade — from nearly 5,000 meters — without suffering any losses.

(A quick plug for Galloway, who co-authored *We Were Soldiers Once ... And Young*, along with Col. Hal Moore, one of the best reads on the Vietnam War ever written. Yeah, I'm proud to say, he's a personal friend of mine.)

Twelve years later, it was quite apparent that even with Saddam's desperate efforts to upgrade his military machine by slipping by the sanctions, his military power was far less than when we kicked his sorry ass the last time.

Chemical, Biological and Nuke weapons. Yep, I readily admit that I was not overly enthusiastic about running around in the desert wearing a hot, heavy suit and booties to protect me against "bad stuff." I'm willing to take, and have taken, my chances with small arms or artillery or air-dispersed ordnance. But that esoteric shit does nothing for me at all. Maybe I'm a coward. So be it.

I will say I was as surprised as the "chattering elite" that he did not use the bad stuff. Maybe he figured that the eunuch-like meddlers at the UN would eventually pull his bacon out of the fire before we smoked him. His refusal certainly wasn't because of any ethics or morality.

However, no matter how sweet the taste of victory, we've got some major, major problems shaping up. What are we going to do about the Shi'ite majority falling victim to a small but dedicated group of Muslim fundamentalists, allegedly supported by the repressive Mullahs in Iran, who are intent on establishing a fundamentalist state in Iraq? I sure as hell don't know. I hope the White House does, though I have my doubts.

And, in closing, not a "tip of the hat" but a "kick of the boot" to the sanctimonious "Colonel Blimps" who are coming down with a heavy hand on any of our troops who want to bring souvenirs back home, because we're "liberators," not "occupiers."

To these REMFs, I say, "Up yours." ☘

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# Sound Off

BY COL. DAVID H. HACKWORTH, USA (RET.)

## Please, No More Made-In-The-USA Monsters

Hopefully, the looting and shooting across Iraq [at press time] will soon subside, and peace will settle over the innocents of Iraq — a people who've suffered only bloodshed and repression ever since our CIA recruited Saddam Hussein more than 40 years ago.

Blame it on the Cold War, when "Better dead than Red" became our national byword, and any useful cutthroats were automatically added to the team if they were against communism. We would have dealt with the devil if he had offered to shoot a commie for Uncle Sam.

So when Iraqi Prime Minister Abd al-Karim Qasim started playing footsie with the Soviets, placing his Red pals in power positions in his government, all wasn't exactly copasetic in Washington. At the time, CIA Director Allen Dulles declared Iraq "the most dangerous spot in the world."

Enter Saddam, whose potential for violence suited us to the max.

Whether it was the threat of Soviet missiles being set up in Iraq or the chance to secure all that black liquid gold as ours for the pumping, we hired Psycho Saddam as our hit man, set him up in an apartment across the street from the prime minister's Ministry of Defense and ordered Qasim taken out with "extreme prejudice."

But the Mustached One's 1959 assassination attempt was a mess-up from the get-go, the botched mission a precursor to his subsequent eight-year war with Iran and later fights with Stormin' Norman and Tommy Franks. The signs were all there right from the start — we just didn't take the time to read the tea leaves.

For openers, Saddam lost his nerve and triggered the ambush too soon. One member of this hit team that couldn't shoot straight had the wrong ammo; another, the grenade man, couldn't fling that sucker because it got caught in his coat; and yet a third member missed the prime minister but somehow managed to shoot Saddam in the leg. Qasim escaped, and so did Saddam, limping off to Cairo, Egypt, where — even after all those blunders — the CIA propped him up in a safehouse and kept his pockets lined with Yankee Green while continuing his training in terrorism.

In 1963, after Qasim was knocked-off in a second CIA black op, Saddam scurried home to slay his way up the power ladder and eventually become head of the dreaded *al-Jihaz a-Khas*, the feared intelligence apparatus of the Ba'ath party.

From there, with a little more help from his CIA pals, he



continued to plot, plunder and massacre his way to the head-beast slot, where we anointed him our newest very best friend. Not just because of the Cold War or Iraq's rich oil deposits, but also because he went after our former best friend and newest major enemy, Iran. We supported our favorite new despot with the works: arms and munitions, precursors for chemical and biological weapons, and intelligence information gained from our ultra-secret intelligence intercepts of Iranian radio traffic and other hot skinny from our satellites showing up-to-the-minute Iranian battle dispositions.

Even current SecDef Donald Rumsfeld rushed to Saddam's palace in 1983 to bow and scrape and assure the Bully of Baghdad he had a Ronald Reagan-signed blank check for almost any bombs and bullets in our arsenal. After which our generals and admirals taught him how to use them, completing his morph into a master of Military Miscalculation.

Then, in 1990, Saddam did a Noriega and foolishly bit the hand that fed him — as has almost every U.S.-sponsored Cold War dictator from every dark corner of every continent. His ill-conceived blitzkrieg against one of our primary gas stations, Kuwait, only served to get him locked-down in Iraq for 12 no-fly-zone years, with heavy sanctions and bombing raids.

And when he still didn't get it, the pre-emptors decided to take him out for good.

Now billions and perhaps trillions of our dollars and our best and brightest will be rebuilding Iraq to create a stable government — a beacon of democratic light in a dimly troubled region.

But that's only if we don't empower yet another world-class serial killer, and then in a decade or two have to spend still more precious American lives making another regime change in a country that's already paid too hard a price. ✕

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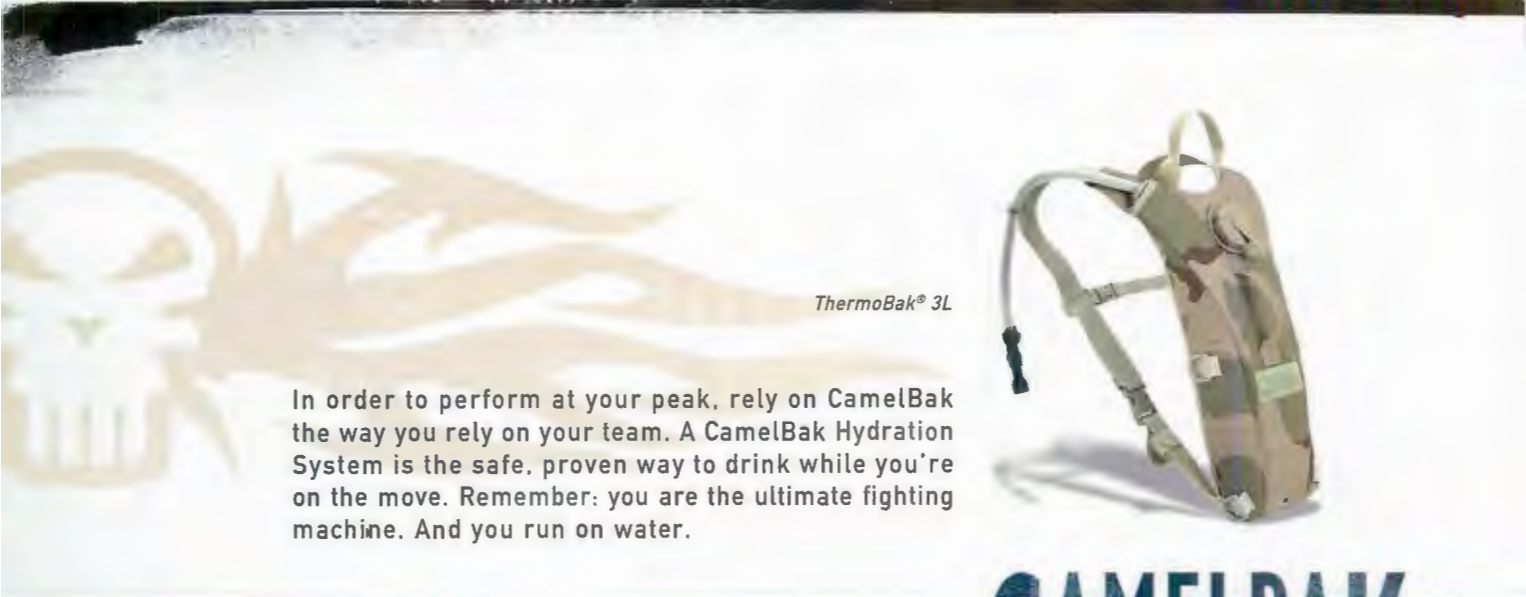
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Look for his new book, *Steel My Soldiers' Hearts*, (Rugged Land LLC, New York City).

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